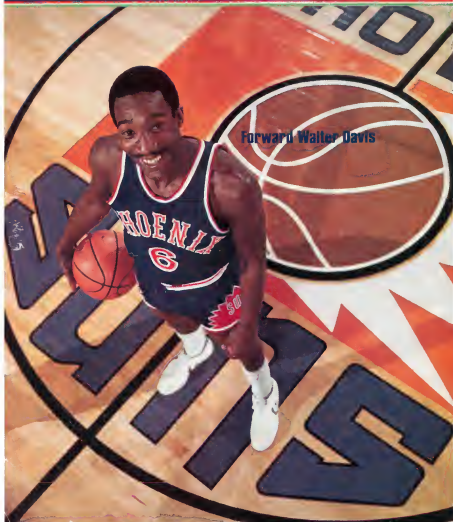


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Sports Illustrated

FEBRUARY 20, 1975 ONE DOLLAR

Forward Walter Davis



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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

You don't need a program to tell the players, but as the masthead now indicates, several members of our team have changed positions.

Mervin D. Hyman, for nine years our chief of research, has become assistant to the managing editor, a job which entails a wide variety of administrative and fiscal duties, most notably acting as liaison between the editorial side of



MYMAN: A NEW JOB FOR AN OLD HAND

the magazine and advertising and publishing

Merv is one of the original SPORTS ILLUSTRATED staffers, having joined the magazine in April 1954, four months before the first issue appeared. During his first 15 years he was a writer who principally covered college football and basketball and made, and maintained, an extraordinary number of valuable sporting contacts. "When I became chief of research, I missed writing," he says, "so I compensated by doing three books—all of them about sports, of course—and I intend to be writing more in the future."

As chief of research, Merv was in charge of our reporting and research staff and, while his name has been in-

ing on our masthead, he has been pleased to see reporters who worked under him move up, too. Nine are now staff writers, one an associate editor and another a senior editor.

Moving into Merv's old slot is Christina Walford, who came to us in 1986 after two years in the Peace Corps spent in the small Moroccan city of Agadir. She has been a researcher for 12 years and Merv's deputy for the last four of them. "Part of the joy of research is being a detective," she says. "You sometimes have to go to ridiculous lengths to pin down a fact, but it is a part of the puzzle and a form of adventure. I have never felt like a librarian. I have felt like a sleuth. But I'm eager to take on this new job. It's a way to enrich my life."

Not that Crissy's life is exactly impoverished. Her current interests include playing Bach on the flute, reading mysteries in Italian, climbing mountains, playing soccer (as "the worst person," she says) on the Fuchs, a coed team that plays once a week in Central Park and, until she completed it last spring, making her own harpsichord. In between, she runs. Crissy began running several years ago on the streets of New York. She now runs almost every day, as far as she finds pleasant—maybe two miles, maybe 10. In December she ran the Jersey Shore marathon in 3:41.32, finishing 850th in a field of 2,000, and is training for another marathon this spring.

The new deputy chief of research is Myra Gelband, who is more interested in golf than in running. Myra has been assigned to golf for four years and will continue to work that beat, so her fans—who include Jack and Barbara and Tom and Linda—will still be seeing her on the tour.

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SCORECARD

Edited by JERRY KIRSHENBAUM

LOGIC BY THE BAY

It appears there will be two major league baseball clubs in the Bay Area again this season, which is at least one more than common sense or economics would seem to dictate. For a while it looked as though the Oakland A's would move to Denver, but owner Charles Finley received a setback last week in his efforts to break his 20-year lease with the Oakland Coliseum and sell out to Colorado oilman Marvin Davis.

The Oakland politicians who run the stadium were willing to let Finley off the hook only if the San Francisco Giants agreed to change the name of the team to something more ecumenical—like the Bay Area Giants—and play half their schedule in Oakland. But San Francisco Mayor George Moscone feels that San Francisco Giants has a certain ring to it and he consented to no more than 20 to 30 Giant games being played in Oakland. Even this much may have seemed magnanimous: Moscone's city, after all, has a team that wants to stay; Oakland's team wants to go.

Yet if logic prevailed—and it is usually the first casualty in the impassioned Oakland-San Francisco civic rivalry—San Franciscans would swallow hard and admit what has long been obvious. Candlestick Park, the Giants' home, has artificial turf (objectionable to baseball purists), is all but inaccessible by public transportation and is too windblown and cold for baseball. Oakland's ball park has real grass, enjoys more favorable weather and—because it is served by BART, the local rapid-transit system—is more convenient than Candlestick even for many San Franciscans. A strong case could be made for the Bay Area's surviving ball club—whatever they call it—to play all its games in Oakland.

DON'T FORGET THE JKEWERS

How do you get Sammy Davis Jr., Eydie Gormé, Steve Lawrence, Bud Wilkinson, Muhammad Ali, Jimmy Connors, Paul Hornum, Jack Nicklaus, Cloris Leach-

man, Paul Anka, Bob Griese, Don Shula, Pancho Gonzales, Reggie Jackson, Telly Savalas and Gerald Ford to attend a \$150-a-plate University of Miami athletic fund-raising dinner?

You roast Woody Hayes. Those celebrities, no doubt drawn by the opportunity to get in some licks at the Ohio State coach, are scheduled to be on hand Feb. 23 for the dinner at Miami's Omni International Hotel. Conspicuously missing from the list—so far, anyway—is Michigan Coach Bo Schembechler. After trying to reach Bo for two weeks, roast organizers finally contacted Mrs. Schembechler, who wasn't much help. "If you reach him, please tell him to call home," she said. Bo was out recruiting, trying to get at Woody in another way.

CAN YOU TOP THIS?

Three weeks had gone by since the roof of the Hartford (Conn.) Civic Center Coliseum collapsed under a weighty accumulation of snow and ice, forcing the World Hockey Association's New England Whalers to move to Springfield, Mass., 24 miles away (SI, Jan. 30). Last week, in the aftermath of a fresh 20-inch snowfall, intrepid Hartforders trudged into the Civic Center's adjacent—and intact—exposition hall to attend something called the Contractors Remodeling Trade Show. Among the exhibits were several featuring methods and materials for repairing roofs.

LET 'ER RIP

Earl Campbell rushed for 1,744 yards and scored 19 touchdowns on his way to the Hersman Trophy last season, but there is one vital Campbell stat that has been largely overlooked: he also went through 90 tearaway jerseys. University of Texas equipment manager Bubba Simpson says the cost of tearaways was \$720 for Campbell—and about \$2,000 for all Longhorn ballcarriers and quarterbacks. Campbell was given one of his torn jerseys as a keepsake and the rest were donated to charities to auction off.

BOUND AND DETERMINED

More than a decade ago that notorious referee baiter, Bones McKinney, then the basketball coach at Wake Forest, attempted to curb his sideline outbursts for one game by strapping himself to the bench with an automobile seat belt. Other tempestuous basketball coaches have occasionally tried—or at least talked about trying—seat belts, too. But nobody has buckled up more tightly than Jerry Carr, coach at Lincoln High School in Portland, Ore. And everybody at Lincoln is satisfied that equipping this Carr with a seat belt was a good idea.

The need for restraint became evident last season. Carr's first as Lincoln coach, when he spent a lot of time stalking the sidelines and raging at officials. This earned Carr a total of seven technicals, which the Cardinals could ill afford as



they struggled to an 8-14 record. One of the technicals came with less than two minutes to go against David Douglas High. David Douglas was awarded two free throws, hit them both and then scored on the inbounds play, winning 53-52. Carr apologized to his team after that one.

During the off-season Carr got to complaining about the refs, saying, "They might as well strap us to our chairs." To Assistant Coach John Quiggle, who doubles as a shop teacher, the words were pure inspiration. With Carr's blessings, Quiggle arranged for a seat belt to be bolted to the head coach's spot on the bench in the school gym.

Despite a won-lost record even worse than last year's (3-15), this season Carr

continued

has stood up at home games only during time-outs. At away games Carr has had to go along without a seat belt, but he remains benchbound. "It's a conditioned reflex," he explains. "I've learned to sit." Carr has picked up a meager two technicals so far this season, each from a sitting position.

SOMETHING TO PROVE

The people who pay Seattle Slew's feed bills say he will race again, but what should be joyous news has a slightly melancholy ring to it. The truth is that Slew's owners, Mickey and Karen Taylor and Sally and Jim Hill, have decided to campaign the Triple Crown winner as a 4-year-old only after meeting some difficulties in their efforts to send him off to the breeding shed.

Slew's course has been less than smooth ever since July 3, when he ran for the last time and suffered his only loss in 10 career starts. Following his defeat by J. O. Tobin at Santa Anita, he was shipped to New York and then to Florida for winter competition. He was training extremely well until he contracted a severe infection that could have killed him. When Slew regained his health, his owners tried to syndicate him, but several factors worked against them. With the breeding season only a few weeks off, Slew had yet to take a fertility test and the top broodmares had long since been booked to other stallions. Some potential breeders were anxious about Slew's illness and his long layoff. Slew's owners also demanded a large say in the breeding operation and some people wanted no part of that because they look upon the owners as "amateurs."

Then there was the question of money. Guessing at the true dollar value of a stallion at time of syndication is a bit like estimating salaries paid Las Vegas entertainers: what you read is seldom what they get. While Slew's owners reckoned his worth to be as high as \$15 million, others thought that figure excessive. They put Slew's value closer to \$9 million, and while that is still a staggering sum, well, \$6 million is a considerable difference of opinion.

Plans now call for Seattle Slew to return to New York in April in hopes that he can run again come May. His next race may well be his most important. A lot of people can question his health or his value, but only he can deliver the answer.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

In a dual swimming meet at the University of Miami, the Hurricanes were trailing favored Florida 54-52 going into the final event, the 400-yard freestyle relay. When the Miami anchor man hit the wall in 3:06.05, narrowly touching out his Gator rival (3:06.17), the Hurricanes apparently picked up seven points to win the meet 59-54. Several Miami swimmers, some wearing sweats and sneakers, plunged into the pool to celebrate.

It was only then that somebody noticed that the anchor man on Florida's hopelessly outmanned B relay team—Miami had not entered a B team—was still poking along in the water. When the lagged finally finished, in 3:31.45, the home crowd's rejoicing turned to shock. Because its people had gone into the water while a race was technically still in progress, Miami's relay team was disqualified and the seven points went to Florida. So did the meet—61-52.

Premature splash parties have caused other disqualifications. In the 1964 AAU championships, a victory by the Santa Clara swim club in the 400-meter medley relay was wiped out when Gary Ilman, who had swum the butterfly on the relay, dived back in before everybody had finished. Indiana's 800-yard freestyle relay was disqualified at the 1971 NCAA championships when relay members John Kinsella and Mark Spitz reentered the pool too soon. And at the AAU championships in 1973, breaststroker John Hencken was too quick to return to the water, disqualifying another victorious Santa Clara 400-medley relay team.

The overexuberant lads who cost Miami the meet against Florida could take comfort at least they were in good company: Ilman, Kinsella, Spitz and Hencken were all past or future Olympic gold medalists.

UNCERTAINTY IN QUEBEC

The ruling Parti Québécois, which wants to make Quebec an independent country, has given sports only cursory attention during its 15 months in power. Sports Minister Claude Charron, whose duties include running Montreal's Olympic Stadium, engaged in some hard talk—but little more than that—during lease negotiations with the Montreal Expos, the stadium's principal tenant. Other Parti Québécois officials have suggested that Claude Mouton, the Forum's bilingual public-address man, ought to dis-

pense with English at Montreal Canadian games. For now, however, Mouton continues to announce in both French and English.

But what will happen if Quebec secedes from Canada? In their zeal to establish national identity, leaders of a fledgling republic of Quebec may well pamper such visible adornments as the Expos, Canadiens, Montreal Alouettes and Quebec Nordiques. But there is reason for apprehension. Given the passions that secession would unavoidably arouse, could the Canadiens, those fabled Flying Frenchmen, safely skate onto the ice in Toronto's Maple Leaf Gardens? Would free agents journey into the political and economic unknown to sign long-term contracts with the Expos? And could the Alouettes remain in what is, after all, the Canadian Football League?

About the only certainty is that a newly independent Quebec would move quickly to field its own Olympic team. This prospect divides Canada's athletes—just as the separatism issue cleaves Canadians generally. "If Quebec separates, I'll go home and compete for Canada," vows Olympic shotputter Bishop Dolegiewiez, an Ontario-born angler who now lives in Montreal. But Olympic high jumper Robert Forget, a French-speaking Montrealer, says, "I would proudly compete for Quebec to show the world that it is a true country."

HIS AND HERS

Kuwait, the oil-rich country on the Persian Gulf where the summertime temperature is normally 120°—and occasionally reaches 165°—has awarded a French company a contract to build a \$10 million ice skating complex with two rinks—one for men, one for women.

THEY SAID IT

- Bear Bryant, divulging his favorite play: "It's the one where the player pitches the ball back to the official after scoring a touchdown."
- Don Cherry, Boston Bruins coach, whose team has never lost to the Washington Capitals: "Next time we play them we should wear five-pound weights on our skates."
- Tom McVie, Washington Capitals coach, informed of Cherry's remark: "He's got a lot of class. If he had to start over with an expansion team, he'd be back selling cars in Rochester within a year."

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Sports Illustrated

FEBRUARY 20, 1978



THE COLD GOLD PREVIEW

No sooner had Lake Placid unveiled its new Olympic rink than champion Eric Heiden slashed his way to victory in what could be a dress rehearsal for 1980's Winter Games

by WILLIAM OSCAR JOHNSON



Applauding his triumph, Heiden hopes to stage a run-in two years from now

It was a preview of things to come in the winter of 1980, and in Lake Placid last weekend both questions and answers were afloat in the cold gray air. Could the faded resort village in the Adirondacks hope to stage a XIII Olympiad in the style of Winter Games past? Two years is precious little time. And could that Wisconsin collegian, Eric Heiden, continue to be a world-beater at speed skating, reappearing two Februaries from now to win all the gold medals?

The answers—well, some of the answers—were falling nicely into place for the 8,000 or so folks attending two major winter sports events in this quiet and remote Upstate New York setting. The world sprint speed skating championships were taking place on the brand-new refrigerated oval atop the football field in front of Lake Placid High School in the first major test of a finished Olympic facility. The two-man and four-man world bobsled championships (see following story) were rattling away at nearby Mount Van Hoevenberg.

The skating competition was not quite Olympian in either size or quality but it was strong enough, with 57 skaters from 15 nations. Most celebrated among them was Heiden, at 19 the reigning all-round champion, and his sister Beth, 18, both of them fresh from the world junior championships at Montreal, where they had swept every event, each taking home four gold medals.

The meet opened on a biting cold morning with light snow falling on a crowd of less than 1,000. Fittingly, the opening speech was made by Jack Shea, who during Lake Placid's tidy little Olympics of 1932 won two gold medals in speed skating. Shea spoke with pride about what had been accomplished at Lake Placid; it was something bordering on the miraculous, he said. And indeed, progress at the site has been little short of a miracle. From the start, skeptics have been sniping at the doughy village citizens who believe they can stage an Olympics. They have been nagged at by environmentalists and accused of sinister

intentions to foul the air, water and woods with their construction of ski jumps, racing courses and parking lots. Often discouraged and sometimes outraged, the Lake Placid organizing committee has kept plugging along. And by last weekend, Jack Shea's talk of miracles had been echoed by Lord Killarney, president of the IOC. Killarney had toured the facilities, and when a member of the Lake Placid Olympic Committee asked him what problems he foresaw, the genial old pipe smoker said, "Gentlemen, I would say that you have conquered your greatest problems. You have made far more progress than anyone could have expected."

The new skating rink pretty much symbolized that progress. Although there were a few trivial criticisms—soft spots from sun reflections, the fences perhaps too close for the safety of falling racers, some dissent about the way shadows fell across it—most competitors felt it was a good, fast rink. Certainly it proved to be to the liking of the American team gen-

continued

erally and to the Heidens specifically.

A sprint speed skating competition is slightly different from a classic overall speed skating championship. In Montreal, for the junior (20 and under) world titles, the Heidens had competed in four different events, at 500 meters, 1,000, 1,500, 3,000 (women) and 5,000 (men). The results were shattering, for never has an individual—either man or woman—swept all four events in that competition. For a brother and sister to do it in a single meet borders on the supernatural. In Lake Placid one of the questions was whether Beth, the 5' 1", 100-pound junior, could hold her own with the big seniors. The sprint competition consists of two 500-meter races and two 1,000-meter races, with one 500 and one 1,000 to be skated on each of the two days of the event.

On the first day Beth raced furiously in the 500 and finished first in a satisfactory, but not overwhelming, 42.97 seconds. Behind her came Russia's 26-year-old Lubov Sadchikova in 43.32, with Connie Paraskevini, 16, of Detroit, third. In the 1,000 meters Beth weakened a bit and finished second to Kim Kostrom, 21, of St. Paul, the women's world champion in 1977. When the first day's competition was over, Beth led by .65 of a second overall.

For those watching, it seemed impossible that this childlike mime could be threatening the finest female speed skaters in the world. She presents a startling contrast to the more classic bulky configuration of world-class women skaters, many of whom are built like defensive tackles. How can she excel in this game? Dianne Holm, who won a gold and a silver in the 1972 Olympics, coaches the two Heidens. Beth, she says, "is an all-round athlete. She was a diver and she is a runner and a cyclist. She gets maximum efficiency out of her strokes when she skates. She is extremely bright and she is constantly thinking about her form, her style, the efficiency of her skating."

On Sunday, Beth faded slightly in both the 500 and the 1,000, and in sprint racing that's enough: thundering up from behind came the big Russian, Sadchikova. She nipped Beth by .51 of a second in the 500, and by .82 in the 1,000. When all the intricate arithmetic was done, Sadchikova, whose profession is listed as "full-time professor of speed skating," had won the title by .18 of a second, shouldering Beth into second.

As for brother Eric, it wasn't even close. After the first day's competition, in which he skated a stirring 500 in 38.22 seconds and a 1,000 in 1:17.47, he was 1.98 seconds ahead of the runner-up, Terje Andersen of Norway. On the second day Eric turned in a sound 500 in 38.69—but a slight slip on one turn cost him an eyblink of time, and Norwegian Frode Ronning cracked ahead of him in 38.52. But in the 1,000 Eric exploded in a powerful, punishing run, churning home in 1:16.52, the best performance of the meet. The championship was his, and another question had been answered.

By now the world is fairly well acquainted with the Eric Heiden phenomenon, but his success is still so new to be worth reviewing. He did no better than 19th in the Olympic 5,000-meter race in Innsbruck in 1976 when he was 17. Then in the 1977 men's world championships in Heerenveen, The Netherlands, he stunned everyone by winning the overall title—the first American to do so in the 76-year history of the event. That year he also won the world sprints and world junior championships. At this point he is a superstar who is still ascending and he could rule speed skating for several years to come. Peter Schotting, the feisty Dutchman who is one of the American coaches, says, "He is now becoming a class of his own. He will not flash out, I think. Eric is a champion for some time to come. I think."

And what makes him such a phenomenon? Schotting says, "It is because of his commitment. He is very mind-strong. He is very confident because, after all, he has never had a defeat. He has continuously gone up and up, so he cannot believe he could go down. Mostly, though, he is this good because he works so hard. If I give the team the afternoon off, of their own choice most of them will take it. But I always know that I will see one lonely figure still working, running down a road to keep up his condition. And that will be Eric."

And so, with completion of this world championship, the questions about Lake Placid's Olympic facilities continued to be answered affirmatively. Though there could be snafus and crises aplenty in the days leading to and during the XIII Olympiad, at least the beginnings were well made. And as for the chances of the brilliant young Heidens to bring home the gold in 1980, for the moment at least there were no better bets in the country.

HOLDING BACK TO CHUTE THE WORKS

The East Germans were sneakily slow in practice, then really poured it on to ice the four-man bobsledding title

by JOHN PAPANKE

It was billed as the 1978 World Bobsled Championships, but it might better have been called Europe's Big Four against the rest of the world. The occasion marked a final salute to a 48-year-old relic, the Mount Van Hoevenberg run at Lake Placid, an icy monument to the 1932 Winter Olympics. Next summer this, the only bob run in North America and still the world's fastest, will give way to a new, \$2.9 million refrigerated course that might make possible a great leap forward into that exclusive European circle for U.S. sledders.

For now, however, the world class begins and ends with the Big Four, whose accomplishments are imposing. There were the strictly business East Germans with two powerful crews headed by Meinhard Nehmer, the 1976 Olympic gold medalist in both two- and four-man sleds, and teammate Horst Schönau. Then came the Swiss, headed by Erich Schärer, Innsbruck's bronze and silver medal winner in two- and four-man competition. And behind that threatening front loomed the West Germans and the up-and-at-'em Austrians.

Even before the first two-man sled went plunging down the 1,560-meter run two weeks ago, everybody else was an also-ran. Even the once-mighty Italians had fallen into the second division. "Ah, we compete," said Nevio De Zordo, the Italian coach. "But we do not compare."

The major reason for the division of power is training time. While most sledders must rely on winter cold to ice tracks in places like Cortina, Cervinia and Lake Placid, the Austrians, for example, have the dazzling new refrigerated run at Innsbruck. They begin training in late October and work out every evening of the winter. The West Germans have a re-

frigerated track at Königssee and the East Germans have one at Oberhof. The Swiss have the best of both worlds: their home track is at St. Moritz, a fine natural course usually blessed with a long season, and they have the money to travel to Innsbruck or Königssee to train when St. Moritz is down. Coming to Lake Placid, the Swiss had already completed as many as 400 runs this season. For its part, the U.S. team could not train until mid-January, and had made fewer than 20 runs. The British, French, Romanians, Canadians, Italians, et al., had to play catch-as-catch-can at various courses.

In the two-man competition, the crowd stood in the 22-below-zero cold and watched the East Germans and Swiss devour the course. Schärer had broken course records twice in training, while East Germany's Nehmer had held back, possibly sandbagging. And sure enough, after the first two heats of the combined four-heat competition, Nehmer and brakeman Raimund Bethge surged to a lead of .18 second over Schärer and Josef Benz. In the first heat of the second day, Benz gave the Swiss sled a tremendous push-off and Schärer drove them down the course in 1:05.12, breaking the course record of 1:06.45 for the fourth time in a week. It was enough to beat Nehmer by a substantial 1.38 seconds, and Schärer made his final run in 1:05.40 for a combined four-run time of 4:22.89 to clinch the gold medal. Nehmer finished second, followed by West Germany's Jakob Resch and the other Swiss sled, driven by Hans Hiltbrand. In all, sleds from the Big Four countries took seven of the first eight places.

There was more of the same when the four-man competition got under way last weekend—with two notable exceptions: the temperature warmed to 20 above, and after the first two heats the U.S. No. 1 sled, driven by Marine Sergeant Paul Vincent, crept into the exclusive company by occupying sixth place.

It was expected that Schärer and Nehmer would resume their duel in the finals, but the day's most stunning performance came from Walter Dellekarth of Austria. First on the track, he bombed through the 16 curves in 1:03.97, smashing the course record of 1:04.37. But his record lasted only until Schärer's sled plunged down in 1:03.90.

Determined to prove that his first run was no fluke, Dellekarth turned his second heat in 1:04.42. He thus opened



Driver Schönuau and his triumphant team are staunch advocates of building "momentum for the final."

a .19-second lead over Schärer, who had trouble on his second run, a 1:04.68.

When the day's racing ended, the East German sleds, No. 1 driven by Schönuau and No. 2 driven by Nehmer, were in third and fourth spots, just .27 and .42 second behind the leader. In training early in the week, the East Germans' times had been markedly unspectacular. Some figured they just didn't have it for the four-man. Others were sure that they were holding back.

Dellekarth, a shipping clerk who has been driving just three years, could barely believe he was leading. His best finish had been sixth in last month's European championships in Austria. "I don't think I am first," he said. "I hope I am not nervous tonight. Tonight I will probably drink more beer than sleep. Tomorrow, you don't know what can happen."

Sunday began with heavy snow falling, slowing the times and creating delays while workmen cleared the run. Dellekarth had to wait nervously for 19 sleds to go ahead of him in the third heat. Nehmer barreled down in 1:04.39. Then Schönuau's sled turned a 1:04.26. Schärer's sled hit 1:04.60. Then it was Dellekarth's turn.

It seemed that perhaps he had, indeed, gone too heavy on the beer the night before. A rattly, shaky run and a bad entry into the hairpin Shady Corner Curve cost him dearly—and his time of 1:05.15 knocked him out of the hunt. Back at the top for the final run, it was East

German sled No. 2, Swiss sled No. 1 and East German sled No. 1—each separated by .28 second.

Nehmer's sled shot away first, turning a 1:04.71. That left teammate Schönuau needing a 1:04.98 to take the lead. And now the sandbagging became evident: he drove hell-bent for a 1:04.58. Finally, on the last sled run of the day, there came Schärer, requiring a 1:04.31 to win. It was not to be. The Swiss missed by .18 second, and Schönuau had the gold medal. Schärer dropped to second, Nehmer was third and Dellekarth fourth. The Swiss No. 2 sled, driven by Schärer's brother Peter, was fifth, and Vincent's U.S. No. 1 sled held on for sixth, the best American finish in the world bobsled meet since 1969.

Schönuau, in the customary business-like East German manner, rushed straight from the medal ceremonies to oversee the dismantling of his sled. "We had been training since September, so we know what we are doing," he said. One more thing, Schönuau. Were you guys really playing possum during training? Well, he allowed, "We want to start slow and build momentum for the final."

And that is one of the many lessons the U.S. learned at Lake Placid. This summer the Mount Van Hoevenberg run will be dug up and rebuilt. And then we shall see if the Americans, still buzzing after their sixth-place finish, can use the training to advantage, just like the Big Four.

END

IT'S WHOOOOSH! BOOM! WHOOOP! TIME

The NBA's rookies are resoundingly led by the Suns' Davis, Johnson of the Bucks and King of the Nets
by CURRY KIRKPATRICK



The three of them are the favorite sons of their widely separated constituencies, have impressive credentials and, like presidential candidates, are trying to become the nominee.

AR-I-ZO-NA. Mr. Chairman, the great desert paradise which bestowed on the nation Barry Goldwater, Linda Ronstadt and the polyester Indian moccasin, is proud to submit the name of the next Rookie of the Year in the NBA, Walter (Sweet D) Davis.

NEW JERSEY. Mr. Chairman, the choice is clear to the industrial hub of the Northeast, the birthplace of Frank Sinatra, the state to which all tunnels burrow except when clogged by snow, soot or the bodies of fallen Mafia leaders. New Jersey is honored to cast its vote for the Pearl of Piscataway, Bernard King.

WIS-CON-SIN. Where there is cheese, Mr. Chairman, there is justice. The land of a thousand breweries, the home of the three L's—La Follette, Lombardi and Lager—the amazing state of Wisconsin gives you our amazing native son (by way of another L, Los Angeles), the Grand Slammer himself, Marques Johnson.

Hyperbole aside, Walter Davis, Bernard King and Marques Johnson may be the best athletes ever to come into the same professional sport at the same time at the same position. Think about this for a minute:

Small Forward Davis has transformed the Phoenix Suns from a last-place Pacific Division team to a championship contender that last week was tied for the second-best record in the NBA. Davis leads the Suns in shooting percentage, as well as in uncanny plays, and is averaging 23.4 points per game, 10th highest in the league.

Small Forward Johnson has transformed the Milwaukee Bucks from a Midwest Division cellar occupant with the tied-for-second-most-terrible record in

King has quick hands, moves well away from the ball, plays headily and collects all the garbage

the pros to a legitimate playoff spoiler whose overall youth and potential scare the bejesus out of everybody. Johnson leads the Bucks in two or three dozen categories, including rebounds, blocked shots, minutes played and gasps from the audience. He is seventh among NBA shooters (53.5%) and 10th among rebounders (11.1 per game).

Small Forward King must be content with single-handedly preventing the incomparably horrible New Jersey Nets from fleeing the coop and seeking some sort of asylum east of Eden. The smart money once held that the Nets, who won only 22 games last season, would be shut out this time. But while watching seven inmates—uh teammates—leave and six new ones arrive, King has averaged 24.3 points (seventh highest in the league), helped the Nets win an astonishing 12 contests and avoided being apprehended with a single video tape machine.

The irony is that none of the rookies was the original heartthrob of his team. Selecting first and third in the draft, Milwaukee went for Center Kent Benson ahead of Johnson, which, in retrospect, looks like the dumbest move the Bucks have made since they traded Kareem Abdul-Goggles, opening the way to obtaining the draft choices in the first place.

Though they will not admit it even at gunpoint, the Suns and the Nets preferred, respectively, Greg Ballard and Tom LaGarde to Davis and King. But, picking fourth, just ahead of Phoenix, the Washington Bullets drafted Ballard while the Nets turned sour on LaGarde at the last minute because of his questionable (now collapsible) knee.

In any event, the league has welcomed its finest group of rookies since 1970-71 when Dave Cowens, Bob Lanier, Pete Maravich, Calvin Murphy and Geoff Petrie entered the lists.

While the likes of Benson, Denver's LaGarde, Kansas City's Otis Birdsong and Los Angeles' Kenny Carr have been set back by injuries; while Ballard and Boston's Cornbread Maxwell have been stifled by erratic playing time; and while Guard Norm Nixon of the Lakers, big men James Edwards of Indiana and Jack Sikma of Seattle, and little men Charlie Criss and Eddie Johnson of Atlanta have played surprisingly well; King, Johnson

and Davis have become instant legends.

It is difficult to imagine any three men playing the same position so differently. King: the inside terror from Tennessee, posting up down low, receiving the pass, and—Whoop! Faster than he can enunciate "With regard to this dazzling move

I am about to protrude on your consciousness," King turns, jumps and delivers, in NBA parlance, "a facial" over his defender.

Johnson: the golden strongboy out of UCLA, hurling his magnificent body through the rafters to grab another re-

continued



Johnson does Milwaukee's heavy work at both ends; is a selfless player in the Cowens mold

bound—Boom!—and, where altogether impossible, jamming another thunderous dunk—Boom! Boom!—as Milwaukee fans approach delirium.

And Davis: the whapper from North Carolina, firing into the lanes on the fast break, making the play with an immaculate, wire-hanging pass or receiving one himself, pulling up on the dead run and accelerating into the air, and—Whoosh!—an automatic two.

Whoever invented the absurd term "small forward" could not have imagined any of these disparate, yet elegant, players at work. Perhaps the only way to describe the variety of their styles is to communicate in onomatopoeic sounds: Whoop! Boom! Boom! Whoosh!

The assumption that King has had the most difficult task—breaking in with a broken-down team—does not actually stand up. Double your teammates' ability, double your pleasure, double your fun, yes. But also double your chances against playing the minutes you need to show your stuff. This is why Johnson's exploits on a pretty good Milwaukee team are probably more impressive than King's with the Nets, and why Davis' accomplishments on a very good Phoenix club earned him a berth in the All-Star Game (and probably the Rookie of the Year award) while the other rookies stayed home.

King, however, is deserving of sympathy because of the guilt he bears by association with the pitiful Nets and his entrapment in Jersey, although, as he has pointed out, "I don't find New Jersey off-hand to be an atmosphere whereas it dictates to a player that they can't feel they're in the NBA." Hooray!

The opposition has felt King's presence often. As the Nets have rolled to their 12-42 record—at one point losing 16 straight—King has scored 39 points against Los Angeles, 44 against Phoenix and 41 against Philadelphia while much of the time being guarded (?) by Julius Erving. "This guy moves away from the ball, not toward it," says Dr. J. "He backs away, and that allows him to get open, where he is deadly." Can he be stopped? "Only time will tell," says Erving.

The 6' 7" King is not as sharp a shooter as Davis nor as devastating a rebounder as Johnson. What he has are the quickest hands since Mandrake and a unique ability to collect all the garbage and shove it back in the basket. "King is John Drew with brains," says one NBA player,

who also recognizes that Bernard is double-teamed every time he so much as whispers.

Unfortunately, whispers have followed King since he was arrested five times in 15 months while an undergraduate at Knoxville—prowling; drunken driving; burglary, pucky, pucky, pucky. NBA opponents didn't know whether to guard him or book him. But so far the Brooklyn native, who doesn't give interviews so much as he distributes oratory—"In reflection of that particular question," Bernard will begin—has kept his nose clean outside of a one-game suspension for missing practice and arriving late for a game.

"I don't like to formulate assumptions that only provoke thought," King said when asked to name his candidate for Rookie of the Year. "If you think you are most deserving, why offer it to anyone else?"

Why offer it to Marques Johnson? Because, says Milwaukee radio voice Eddie Doucette, who took one look at Johnson's incendiary bomb-dunking prowess and labeled him "the Grand Slam," Marques is "affable, articulate, visible, charismatic, has savoir faire and is the next O. J. Simpson." Well, maybe so. The handsome Californian also scored high in diplomacy when he complimented the inhuman Milwaukee winter weather: "It just gives me a chance to broaden horizons."

On the basketball front, Johnson is equally polished. He does not have the outside shooting touch or scoring ability of his rookie rivals, but he carries a bigger lead at both ends of the floor. "We ask Marques to get points and rebounds, to get out on the break and run, to defend the heavy hitters, to take the physical punishment," says Coach Don Nelson. "I haven't seen a guy so willing to learn and to play the non-glorious aspects since Dave Cowens."

Johnson is so strong in what coaches call "the low box area," and such a monster of a jumper, that most of his shots are initiated from above the rim. "I've been wrapped up in going to the basket all my life," he says.

The 220-pound Johnson is listed at 6' 7" but doesn't look that tall, which makes his numbers off the glass seem all the more outrageous. The Grand Slam has led the Bucks both in scoring and rebounding in 19 games, including the team's exhausting 152-150 triple-over-

time defeat of the New York Knicks, in which he played 52 minutes and had 27 points, 18 rebounds and six blocked shots. In a split of two games against Erving and the 76ers, Johnson's card read 56 points and 28 rebounds to Dr. J's 52 and nine.

Milwaukee Guard Quinn Buckner attributes his teammate's rebounding artistry to extraordinary lateral jumping. "Marques doesn't let too many balls come to him," Buckner says. "He's got a flex span like David Thompson. He's up,



When he's over there, then he's way over there. He's ridiculous."

Back Forward Dave Meyers, who played college ball with Johnson, says, "Did I think Marques would be this good? Marques was this good as a freshman at UCLA."

Walter Davis was not as good when he was a freshman at Chapel Hill. Nor did he possess his currently brilliant all-round running, jumping, passing, shooting and defending skills, which have everybody in the NBA comparing him to—

don't strike them dead, Lord—John Havlicek. He was introduced to Havlicek before a Phoenix victory over Boston. Davis then poured in a career-high 40 points, many of them over Hondo's bewildered head.

Actually, nobody could tell how good Sweet D was in college, so frequently did North Carolina Coach Dean Smith run him in and out of the lineup, and so willing was Davis to subjugate his talents within the Tar Heel team concept. Big Carolina names, such as Bobby Jones

(with whom Davis also played in high school), Mitch Kupchuk and Phil Ford, always got the ink while, Davis says, "I felt like the kid who made A's on his report card but nobody said, 'Good work.' Coach Smith kept me going."

Atlanta Hawk Coach Hubie Brown was among NBA investigators who were not fooled. "This kid gave up his one-on-one skills to play the passing game at Carolina," says Brown. "How many guys ever saw Walter Davis do his dance? Nobody. Now nobody can guard him."

Philadelphia's Erving (who somehow appears to be the patsy of this piece but in reality is the NBA's Shane, against whom the young gunslingers must test themselves) was assigned to guard Davis twice. The games were split, but the gun of the Suns went for 35 and 29 points to Erving's 19 and 12. "Against Sweet D," said one observer, "the good Doctor looked like a horse doctor."

Davis' name did not appear on the All-Star ballot distributed to civilians—he was added to the team by a vote of the coaches—but in a separate players' tally he outpolled Rick Barry by 10 votes for a starting position on the West squad.

Even Marques Johnson admits that Davis has a superior arsenal. "My game is inside and on the board, Bernard's is around the lines," Johnson says, "but Walter Davis' game is everywhere."

And everywhere he has played, the angular (6' 6", 180 pounds) Davis has been a phenomenon in the fourth quarter. His average scoring by quarters this season, first to fourth, reads 4.8, 5.2, 6.3 and 7.3. He has hit double figures in the final period no less than 20 times. "Walt's flat-out the best forward in the league," says Phoenix's All-Star guard, Paul Westphal.

It is no coincidence that the 36-16 Suns have already won more games than they did all last season and are headed toward their finest record. "Adjustments?" says Davis. "The only difference from last year is I'm wearing orange and white instead of blue and white. I love the togetherness here."

However, there is love and there is love. Last week Davis arrived in Phoenix a day late from the All-Star break, missing practice, and was fined by Sun Coach John MacLeod. Where was he? Why, working out with the North Carolina Tar Heels, of course.

So even Sweet D Walter Davis is not above making basic rookie mistakes. **END**

Davis has a more complete game—running, passing, shooting, defending—than Kuy or Johnson

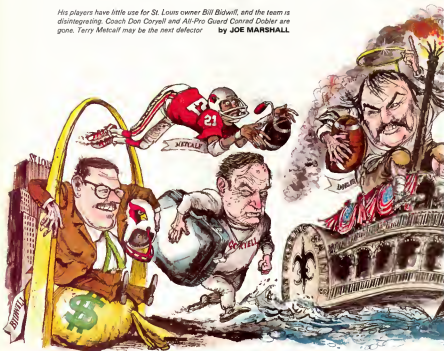


HE DON'T GET NO RESPECT FROM HIS CARDINALS

His players have little use for St. Louis owner Bill Bidwell, and the team is disintegrating. Coach Don Coryell and All-Pro Guard Conrad Dobler are gone. Terry Metcalf may be the next defector **by JOE MARSHALL**

Above the hallway leading to the offices of the St. Louis Cardinals' coaches in Busch Memorial Stadium there is a new ceiling. A leak caused the old ceiling to collapse back on Dec. 10. For St. Louis, more than the roof fell in that day. The Cardinals were springing leaks all over the place. On the heels of a 26-20 loss to Washington that ended his team's playoff hopes, St. Louis Coach Don Coryell leveled a verbal blast at local fans and the Cardinal management. "I'm not staying in a place I'm not wanted," Coryell raged. "I'd like to be fired. Let me have a high school job."

Last Friday, two months to the day



from Coryell's outburst, the Cardinals patched up one of their leaks by announcing that through a "mutual agreement" between Coryell and team owner Bill Bidwill, Coryell would no longer be the coach. Unfortunately, Bidwill's patchwork wasn't as neat as the handiwork on the ceiling. For the last two months the Cardinals, who under Coryell had been one of the NFL's most successful and exciting teams, have been a turmoil, and the once dazzling Cardiac Cards were being called the Chaotic Cards.

Among other things, Coryell had complained that Bidwill's tightfistedness in salary matters saddled him with a lot of

unhappy players. In fact, 12 Cardinals, including Running Back Terry Metcalf, the notorious fumbler, have rebelled against Bidwill's penuriousness by becoming free agents. All are actively shopping their services with other teams. A likely free agent, Wide Receiver Ike Harris, was dealt down the river to New Orleans along with disgruntled All-Pro Guard Conrad Dobler, who demanded to be traded when Bidwill declined to renegotiate his contract. In return for Harris and Dobler, St. Louis acquired Bob Pollard, a defensive end known as Captain Crunch—when known at all—and Guard Terry Steve. Coryell, still the coach at the time, learned of the trade from a local reporter. The deal appears to be so lopsided in favor of New Orleans that it has diminished what little credibility the Cardinal front office may still have.

All along, Coryell had excoriated the Cardinals for not giving him a voice in college draft selections. "Coaches should have a say in who they will coach," Coryell argued, "because if a team doesn't win, it's the coach who gets fired." In 1977 the Cardinals, high powered on offense but porous on defense, used their first two draft picks for Quarterback Steve Pisarkiewicz and Running Back George Franklin. As it turned out, neither Pisarkiewicz nor Franklin played a down last season. Franklin hurt a knee during training camp, and Pisarkiewicz rode the bench behind regular Quarterback Jim Hart and backup Bill Donckers, prompting one St. Louis writer to quip, "Pisarkiewicz was the first redshirt in NFL history."

By itself, the draft serves as an alarming indicator of the inefficiency of St. Louis' personnel department. Fewer than half of the players picked in the top five rounds over the past five years remain with the Cardinals, and of their eight first-round picks in the '70s, only two—Tight End J. V. Cain and Defensive Tackle Mike Dawson—are starters.

At the time of Bidwill's "mutual agreement" announcement, Coryell and Bidwill were not on speaking terms. Their long-simmering feud escalated into a silent war on Jan. 10. The coach and the owner were scheduled to meet that day

to resolve Coryell's status, and the press had been so alerted. Coryell, however, stood Bidwill up, flying to Los Angeles in quest of the Rams' then-vacant head coach's position. Coryell called Bidwill from the St. Louis airport and apprised the owner of his itinerary. "I didn't wish him bon voyage," Bidwill snaps. The irate Bidwill then refused Coryell permission to visit San Diego, where Bidwill had found him coaching on the campus of San Diego State and where bumper stickers were already proclaiming: CORYELL FOR THE CHARGERS.

Bidwill later put a damper on Coryell's hopes for the Rams' job by announcing he would not release Coryell from the last three years of his St. Louis contract unless the Rams gave the Cardinals a No. 1 draft pick. This threat irked Coryell. "The Rams have a spot for a No. 1, and he's faster than me," Coryell said.

As the verbiage flew, Bidwill had the locks changed on the Cardinal offices to keep Coryell out and to prevent the assistant coaches from scattering to other teams with Cardinal game plans. Of course, they could have the college draft lists.

Strangely, these same Cardinals had a right to be dreaming Super Bowl on Nov. 20 after they had beaten Philadelphia 21-16 for their sixth straight win. Their record was 7-3, they had defeated Dallas, and the NFC's wild-card playoff berth seemed a cinch. But then St. Louis lost to Miami 55-14 on Thanksgiving Day and 10 days later fell to the New York Giants 27-7, making that Dec. 10 game with the Redskins a "must win" if the Cardinals expected to be in the playoffs for the third time in four years.

At halftime of that game, with St. Louis losing 13-10, Coryell's wife Alissa, who had never been happy with the family's move from hot-weather San Diego to the unpredictable climes of St. Louis, left the stadium, claiming she could no longer tolerate the fans' abusive comments about her husband. Coryell's 16-year-old daughter Mindy tried to punch one fan who made a derogatory comment about her father. After the loss to Washington, Coryell simmered for several hours, then phoned a local reporter and blew his top.

Coryell blasted management again in a
continued





Mrs. Coryell turned off the Cards' noisy critics, but daughter Mandy chose to join on them.

column by Jack Murphy of The San Diego Union that appeared before St. Louis lost its final game of the season—and fourth in a row—to Tampa Bay. In the story were these comments: "A lot of our guys are playing out their options and they'll scatter if they could. . . . We have such a limited budget the trend is obvious. . . . Next year we'll win four games, the year after we'll win two. . . . Not more than two of our defensive players could start for the New York Giants."

Coryell's dissatisfaction with the status quo left the Cardinal players, most of whom privately supported him, convinced that he could not now return under any circumstances. "At first everybody thought his outburst was a spur-of-the-moment thing because he wanted to win so badly," says Defensive Back Roger Wehrli, "but after that he never pulled any of his comments back. I guess he meant it." Adds Placekicker Jim Bakken, "I don't think he could have come back without an explanation to the players, without the things he said being squared away."

Draft procedures aside, the major issue in St. Louis seems to be the team's salary policy. Will Bidwill bid well for Metcalf

and the other Cardinal free agents? Will he upgrade the low-by-comparison contracts of many of his stars? As Coryell says, "You can't have people mad about how much money they've been paid and expect them to do their best."

The Cardinals have not always been Scrooges. In the mid-'60s they had one of the highest payrolls in the NFL. In those days, though, the team was jointly owned by Bill Bidwill, who served as vice-president, and his older brother Stormy, who was president. "If a player didn't get what he wanted from one of us," says Bill, "he just went to the other." When Bill bought out Stormy in September of 1972, he began to institute what he felt were good business principles. "I make a concerted effort to have a sound salary structure," he says. He talks frequently of the "sanctity of the contract," and steadfastly refuses to renegotiate existing agreements.

Bidwill's tactics have come under public scrutiny as the result of the NFL's new collective bargaining agreement that allows a dissatisfied player to test his value in the marketplace when his contract expires. To prevent this, many NFL clubs have been signing their players to lucrative long-term contracts.

Bidwill goes the other way. "It's very popular now to badger us about our money policies," he says, "but if we paid a player more money, would he be a better player? I don't think having a lot of people in their option year hurts our morale. It's just the new system. Negotiating is no longer an emotional issue. That's why players hire agents. I'd like to keep all our players. If one of them comes back with a higher offer, we've just got to look at it and ask, 'Were we wrong?'"

Bidwill's chief salary negotiator is 53-year-old director of operations Joe Sullivan, whom the Cardinal players claim is out of touch with today's athlete. Sullivan sees the positive side of letting someone play out his option. "Maybe you can get a little more from a player who is down in the mouth about his salary by having him play for himself," he says. "I tell that player, 'I don't agree that you're worth what you say, but at the end of the year you'll have a chance to prove it in the open market, so go out there, work real hard and show everybody what you can do.'"

Predictably, the St. Louis players regard management's financial attitudes as a roadblock. Last year Safety Ken Reeves, whom the Cardinals permitted to enter the free market on Feb. 1 without even making him a contract offer, warned, "This club is happy because it is winning, but if it ever starts to lose, watch out. They're not interested in fielding a winner here, only in making money." Pro Bowl Center Tom Banks, who earned \$60,000 last season, griped, "I'm supposed to be the best center around, but I made \$17,000 less than the average salary paid centers. It's an insult, a direct slap in the face. All these years the Cardinals have led me to believe 'I am actually being overpaid through their own generosity. I want to be traded.'" As Debluer, who made only \$55,000 in St. Louis, set sail for New Orleans, he took a parting shot at Bidwill. "I'm not the only guy leaving the Cardinals," he said. "I think they're having a going-out-of-business sale in St. Louis."

Another Cardinal player says, "On a football team you have to believe that everyone in the organization is devoted to winning. A lot of people on our team don't believe that's the way Bill Bidwill thinks. They think that he feels that as long as the stadium is full, everything is O.K. From a business standpoint his approach to the free market is fine, but it's

continued

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MG TAR
1.3 MG NIC.



18
MG TAR
1.3 MG NIC.



17
MG TAR
1.0 MG NIC.



17
MG TAR
1.0 MG NIC.



12
MG TAR
0.9 MG NIC.



11
MG TAR
0.9 MG NIC.



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not a good psychological approach. It's not conducive to winning."

Most NFL club executives seem to agree with that last assessment. "I think the great number of option playouts on the Cardinals had something to do with their collapse at the end of last season," says one front-office man. "Sometimes you have to temper good business sense with good judgment."

Poor Bill Bidwill. He don't get no respect. When Stormy was president, Bill had few responsibilities, so when he gained sole control of the team he was determined to prove himself. On the whole he hasn't done badly. In 1973, after a few months in the president's chair, he fired Stormy's handpicked coach, Bob Hollway, and hired Coryell. In his first year Coryell suffered through a 4-9-1 season. St. Louis' third in a row, and the joke around town was "For God, for country, four nine and one." But under Coryell the Cardinals developed a productive and entertaining big-play offense and won division titles in 1974 and 1975. They were a competitive 10-4 in 1976 but missed the playoffs.

While most St. Louisans think of Bidwill as being cheap, he raised the salary of Wide Receiver Mel Gray from \$28,000 to \$100,000 last season in order to keep him. He also raised Quarterback Jim Hart from \$110,000 to \$170,000, although stopping short of Hart's requested \$200,000. The Cardinals have not negotiated with Metcalf yet, but Metcalf reportedly has talked with another club about a \$2.35 million package, including \$300,000 a year for seven years and a \$250,000 signing bonus. Is Bidwill cheap not to get into a price war over Metcalf at this stage—or merely sane?

Bidwill's biggest problem may be his shyness. "Bill is uncomfortable in the presence of players, so he goes out of his way to make the players uncomfortable," says one Cardinal. "He doesn't offer you the chance to be his friend. There isn't a player on this entire club who can stand to be in the presence of Bill Bidwill."

When the players gave Bidwill the game ball after clinching the 1974 NFC East championship, he cried openly. On the other hand, long after the Cardinal loss to the Redskins last Dec. 10, Bidwill was seen sitting in his office, crying over the defeat. Maybe he sensed that winning was going to get harder for the Cardinals in the future. Or maybe he knew that the roof was about to fall in. **END**

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THE WORLD IS SMALL AT 185 MPH

Riding with NASCAR star Benny Parsons on a thundering tour of Daytona can be eye-opening—if you have the nerve to look

by SAM MOSES

I'd like to be able to thunder through life at 200 mph, on the edge of, but always under, control. The next best thing might be to go 200 mph in a stock car, because a speeding stock car is about as close as you can come to rolling thunder. So I asked Benny Parsons, the 1973 NASCAR points champion, if I could thunder around Daytona International Speedway with him in his 565-horsepower, 3,700-pound, red, white and blue Chevy Laguna, and would he please go 200, top the big two-oh-oh, and he said, more or less. "You a dumb sumbitch, ain't you?" But he agreed, although 190 would be the most he could deliver at Daytona. We arranged the ride for a day when Parsons' crew had rented the tri-oval to do aerodynamic testing on his 1978 race car, which will make its Super Speedway debut next week in the Daytona 500.

It was a beautiful clear December morning, about 65° and cloudless. I arrived at the Speedway and stopped my rental car for a moment in the parking lot, at the entrance to the tunnel that goes under the track to the infield. Spilling over the massive dirt embankment in front of me was the solo roar of a big V-8 engine as Parsons, alone on the track, swooped through Turn 4, almost directly overhead. I looked up through the top

of the rental car's windshield, into the tinted part, and about 50 feet above me I saw the tall steel-wire catch fence that rims the track's three-foot-high cement wall. The catch fence is there to keep the cars from hurtling over the wall, flying through the air and crash-landing in one of the parking lots, or maybe in a marsh, depending on the point at which the car departed the premises and how far it flew. The catch fence wasn't part of the track when it was built. It came two years later, after Lee Petty, Richard's father, launched his Plymouth into the swamp during the 1961 race.

When I was in the Navy and on a destroyer at sea, fighter jets would sometimes playfully buzz the ship's deck. The jets would come out of nowhere, shriek, and go back to nowhere in a matter of two seconds. The stock cars' thunder in the tunnel is very similar. The cars seem faster when you listen to them than when you watch them. If you want to get a real sense of the speed race cars travel, curl up inside the tunnel during a practice session.

You get an other-world feeling after you drive through the dark tunnel beneath the track and pop up into the infield. Because the last few yards of the tunnel are uphill and steep, you see nothing but sky out your windshield as you re-

enter daylight. You sort of feel like you're being shot out of a cannon in slow motion. (A few NASCAR drivers are fond of flooring their rental cars midway through the tunnel so they fly out like cannonballs in not-so-slow motion.) When your car levels, you give an instinctive where-am-I blink to get your bearings.

The tri-oval is 2.5 miles around, which gives the infield an area of 114 acres. The ground is so level and spacious it seems like a prairie, at least when there are not tens of thousands of spectators in there with you. During Speed Weeks, when there are fans, cars, vans, motorcycles and charcoal grills everywhere, the abrupt, semiblinked exit from the tunnel leaves you with a far different impression; you sometimes feel as if you're being fed to the crowd.

On this quiet morning, however, Parsons' Chevy seemed to be the only other inhabitant of this closed world, and the sound of it echoed eerily all around me as it flattened itself against Turn 2's steep banking. Although it was going 180 mph, the car just seemed to be making steady progress onto the back straight and around the track. Watching a stock car from a distance is like watching it on TV; it doesn't seem to be going very fast and a lot of excitement is lost somewhere along the way between the car and your eye. You have to get close, right there in the grandstand in Turn 4 or along the front straight, to even begin to understand what a two-ton hunk of metal looks like noisily swallowing 264 feet of asphalt every second.

Parsons stopped at his garage. Soon his car was being dressed and undressed with assorted sheet-metal pieces from 1978 GM cars: a Chevy Malibu, a Buick Regal, an Oldsmobile Cutlass. The Cincinnati team was trying to determine

continued



which front end offered the least wind resistance; that would be the model of car Parsons' Chevy would be known as for the 1978 season.

Detroit's introduction of new models each fall sends NASCAR chief mechanics rushing off to dealers' showrooms to stroke and squint at the changed contours. They aren't excited by ersatz wood dashboards or digital clocks; they couldn't care less what's under the hoods; all they're interested in is the sleekness of the bodies. NASCAR rules are loose; a late-model stock car shares only a handful of parts with its showroom counterpart. Peel the skin away and they are very much alike. The engines among the top few teams are so similar—even among different makes—it's almost a toss-up. Some days Parsons' or Cale Yarborough's Chevy had a couple of extra hp, and that's about all. Most of the chassis are built to the same dimensions by the same man—ex-driver Banjo Matthews. And as for driver talent, Parsons can be as fast as

Yarborough or Petty on any given day.

That leaves only two big variables: suspension setup and aerodynamics. Suspension setup, which includes tire selection, is the key to success in Grand National stock-car racing. Usually one, sometimes two cars per race handle so well they work in any "groove" on the track. Last year no car on the NASCAR circuit consistently handled better than Parsons' Chevy.

Aerodynamics affect top speed more than cornering ability. Race-car aerodynamics is a science; some teams, the Pettys, for example, do their aerodynamic tests in a wind tunnel. Most teams go a more empirical route. Given the flexibility of NASCAR rules, a crew chief has to discover the streamlining that works and that which doesn't, and how much deviation from showroom dimensions for the sake of streamlining he can get away with. The technical inspectors fit templates over the cars to make sure they aren't too low or too narrow or too slanted.

Jake Elder, Parsons' crew chief, has a flair for this sort of thing, although he is not scientific about his art. If Jake were a cook, he wouldn't use measuring spoons. He doesn't fool with any theories he can't see and feel. He doesn't even bother with things like measuring the frontal area to determine whether a Chevy, Buick or Oldsmobile nose should be slicker. He just holds the pieces up to the light for inspection, bolts a front end that looks good to him on the car, sends Parsons around the track as fast as he can go and damn well finds out which nose is slickest. He raises his hand at one angle, like a goodbye wave, and says, "The Buick won't work so hot because it's like this." And then he tilts his hand back, like a military salute, and says, "But the Olds is right like this, rawr chare, see, and it's going to be a boss."

Jake made this observation over lunch. For dessert he ordered a piece of ice-cream fudge cake. As the waitress delivered it, Jake's eyes bulged. "That's big enough for four people," he said. Then he held the menu up to the light for inspection, tapped the picture of the ice-cream fudge cake and told the waitress, "It's not that big in the picture on the menu." The waitress wrinkled her eyebrows and scratched her head. Stock-car crew-chief logic works better on cars than it does on waitresses.

Back in the garage, Jake ducked inside the Chevy's right front-wheel well, and the metallic clinking of a ratchet wrench came from the cavity that had swallowed his head and shoulders. He was adjusting the suspension to allow for the addition of my 160 pounds. I was strapped inside the car now, and Benny was standing outside at my window. He handed me a release form that legally absolved him and the owner of the car, L. G. DeWitt, should something unscheduled transpire. I signed the form, and then he suggested I spit out my gum, lest I swallow and choke on it. I stuck the bubble gum to a metal windshield brace, then promptly forgot about it until right now.

The car was filled with steel tubes the diameter of a man's forearm; they formed a box around the driver, traveling in horizontal, vertical and diagonal directions, crisscrossing in places, and meeting at the corners, where they were joined with flat welds. Everything was painted bright red except for the dashboard, which was flat black to reduce glare.



Ex-cabine Parsons has made more than \$7 million racing, but doesn't like to see Turn 3 rushing at him

Parsons' only other instruction was where I should put my right arm. My elbow was resting on a tube of the roll cage, next to which was the sheet metal of the door. He suggested I keep my fingers on the inside of the roll tube rather than between the tube and the door; that way my hand wouldn't get mashed if we should smack the wall.

Benny climbed in the window on his side, hooked the nylon net over that window, strapped the four ends of the seat harness together at his crotch, fired up the engine, which growled as he blew it out, pulled down his blue-tinted plastic bubble goggles, looked at me, smiled and shook his head.

Physically, Parsons is the quintessential stock-car driver. A native of North Carolina, he paid his dues driving a cab in Detroit. He looks a bit like a big-city cabdriver: tall, a little bit paunchy, balding, a cigar dangling from his mouth, and large, loose-fitting black boots catching the cuffs of his pants at his shins. Last year he became the sixth stock-car driv-

er to win more than a million dollars during a career, and won four races, three of them on Super Speedways. But in previous years he has had a knack for losing the big ones. NASCAR racing is fairly cutthroat, and Parsons is not as comfortable as some with the razor in his hand. Petty says, "Benny is too nice a guy on the track. We're all nice off the track, but we change when we get in a race car. Benny doesn't."

Idling down pit row, Parsons checked the water-temperature gauge by tapping his finger on the glass. The engine was overheating. "We'll take a slow ride around the racetrack, and if it doesn't cool down we'll stop and try to find out what the deal is," he said.

On the backstretch he glanced between my feet and spotted a trickle of water on the red metal floorboard. After 11 seasons of racing, his eye is trained to spot such minute signs of trouble. I looked for the trickle for a quarter of a lap before I could even find it.

The next time around Parsons killed

the engine on the backstretch, and we coasted toward the pits on the track apron. A car has to be going about 75 mph to stay up on the 31° banking. Below that speed it will literally slide off.

We rolled silently back into the garage. "Hell, the radiator's plumb cold," said Elder, feeling the aluminum core and ignoring the water-temperature gauge. "Cracked head," he mumbled around some garbled cursing. His hands were visible through the space underneath the raised hood, framed by the windshield braces. The hands were pouring water into the radiator from an old galvanized garden can with a pointed spout.

As we pulled onto the track again, Parsons, eyeing the water-temperature gauge, said, "If you feel hot water spraying your face, punch me." We took two cautious warmup laps at 3,500 rpm—about 90 mph—and the water temperature stayed well below boiling. Parsons pegged the throttle at the start-finish line on the third lap.

I had expected neck-snapping accel-

continued



There is no margin of error to protect Parsons from the cement guardrail that rims the track when his car is hurtling over 204 feet of pavement every second.



Moses remembered to record the ride but a sliver of his guts was forgotten in the excitement

eration. I had expected too much from a two-ton race car. We accelerated fairly undramatically to about 150 mph by the time we reached Turn 1. The first thing I noticed was the morning sun rising over the top of the wall, reflecting off the Chevy's flat black hood, which right now was wearing an Oldsmobile nose. A row of fresh, round, spot welds on the fender gleamed goldish brown, rusty from overnight dew on the car. Scraps of silver duct tape stuck out from the crack where the hood met the fender and flapped in the wind. In fact, the whole front end of the car was rippling, both from the wind and the vibration of a 75-pound crankshaft and eight coffee-can-sized pistons frantically working beneath it. "Every time I looked down at that hood it was sittin' up and smilin' at me, happy as can be," said Benny later.

If the hood was sittin' up and smilin',

the wall was standing stock still, rigid and frowning. The ideal line for most drivers is not the high groove—that is, they don't drive door handles-against-the-wall all the time—but one down lower on the banking. In the Daytona 500, however, there are 39 other cars on the track and this makes for situations that are not always ideal. Sometimes a driver must move into the high groove to pass another car. Sometimes a driver being passed would rather not give the passing driver as much room as he would like. That's why there are catch fences on top of the walls.

When a car is all alone, as Parsons' was now, the wall remains a good three feet away, even down the back straight. "Good" is a relative word, of course. In stock-car racing, three feet is as good as a mile, but some people might not think three feet from a concrete wall at 185

mph good at all. Most private planes cruise at about 140 mph, and the Federal Aviation Administration requires them to maintain 500 feet separation.

I turned my attention from the wall to the track. I recognized old familiar patches on the pavement. Last March I had been on a four-man team that set the 24-hour motorcycle average speed record of 117.125 mph and had ridden some 200 laps around Daytona. The same black patch between Turns 3 and 4 that when hit at 130 mph on a 650-cc. Kawasaki had caused it to wiggle, wander and weave, when hit at 180 mph in the Chevy caused it to bounce and drag the exhaust pipes with a metallic scrape.

We were moving at more than 180 mph now; Benny pointed to 7,000 rpm on the tachometer along the backstretch, having earlier said 7,000 rpm equaled 182 mph. Through the turns at this speed, Parsons was turning the steering wheel no more than a few degrees. I had always thought the steering of a stock car was supposed to be unresponsive. I had this mental picture, vivid but apparently unreal, of drivers wrestling their tipped steering wheels like over-the-road truckers, twisting them from lock to lock, wrenching their elbows up around their ears and flapping their forearms about their eyeballs. It doesn't happen that way. At least not at Daytona.

Bobby Allison pulled onto the track ahead of us. He was testing the aerodynamics of a new Thunderbird. Because of the sharpness of the turns and steepness of the banking, we were not looking ahead at Allison; we were raising our chins and looking up at him. Benny traced a small arc on the top left corner of the windshield and said, "In a race this is about all the space I ever look through."

Parsons' eyes were darting. I was paying attention to just three things—Benny's movements, the track and the water-temperature gauge, but at 185 mph things were happening so quickly I could barely keep up with them. Race-car drivers must be gifted not only with superior reflexes but also fantastically quick mental processes. During a race a driver must pay attention to five gauges, the rearview mirror and his groove on the track—which is to say he has to watch where he's going and, of course, where the other cars are going, which is often the most difficult part. If he drops his guard, let's his concentration slip for a fraction of a

second over a four-hour period and it is the wrong fraction of a second, he could end up dead. Some people think stock-car drivers just like to go fast; let those people try concentrating on that many things that fast at once, with stakes that high.

At 185 mph, the oval loses its feeling of massiveness, because your mind is completely on the here and now. Neither thoughts nor eyes can afford to be anywhere but on the instrument panel and the stretch of track ahead. You worry about the next turn only when you come to it. At 185 mph, the world is very small.

Parsons is not as fond of these speeds as some other drivers profess to be. He went 192.684 mph in qualifying to win the pole position for the last NASCAR race at Talladega, the only track faster than Daytona, yet he says, "Anybody says he loves 200 mph, he's pumpin' wind." As we approach Turn 3 at 185, he says, "I ain't been 185 since Talladega last August, and on my first fast lap this morning, looking down the back straight and watching Turn 3 come to me like a mine shaft I was falling into, I asked myself, 'What the hell am I doing out here?' The pavement rushes by like whoosh, whoosh. I see that turn coming and say, 'How the hell is this car going to get around that?'"

The temptation to back off the throttle going into Turn 3 is more like a compulsion. To get through the turn flat out, you have to ignore it. The first time you try it, you begin psyching yourself as you come out of Turn 2; when you hit the middle of the backstretch you've got butterflies; by the time you reach the end of the straight you're talking out loud to yourself, telling your foot to stay on the floor. Sometimes the foot listens, sometimes it doesn't.

If Parsons actually was questioning himself as we entered Turn 3, it never showed. He moved the steering wheel a couple of smooth, steady ticks to the left, a movement sort of like squeezing a trigger. The car dropped down two lanes of the banking, into the qualifying groove, and the shadow suddenly slid off the wall, as if the wall had been yanked up and away from my right ear. About midway through the turn the car began to drift back up and the wall began to drop back down. A properly set-up car with fresh tires will not usually drift all the way into the guardrail as long as the driver keeps his foot down, but—and this is a par-

adox that confuses and sometimes frightens and often temporarily intimidates inexperienced stock-car drivers—if he backs off the throttle, the car has a tendency to straighten out, in other words, to head right up into the curving wall. Parsons didn't even glance at the wall out of the corner of his eye; he's been around Daytona enough times to know precisely where it is without looking.

The car stopped drifting a few feet from the wall—in a race that few feet often becomes a few inches—as we came out of Turn 4; the car hit another notorious hump in the track and undulated once, no more, and Parsons pointed the flat black Olds nose straight at the start-finish line to complete the lap.

He pulled into the pits and, even before he removed his helmet, said what he usually says the first thing after a race: "Anybody got a cigarette?" Jake told him he turned a 49.40, which is an average speed of 182.186, fast enough for a strong grid position in the Daytona 500.

"It was an uneventful run," says Benny. "It wasn't one of those deals where you get sideways. Nothing exciting happened, thank the Lord."

One comfort is the safety of the car. A NASCAR racer is the safest racing automobile made. The driver is surrounded by a lot of steel and a sturdy roll cage, which together make a wonderful security blanket. Psychologically speaking, a stock car is much more comfortable than an Indy car, which travels somewhat faster, weighs less than half as much and in which the driver is surrounded with fuel and fragility. Indy-car drivers respect stock-car drivers because they recognize driving a stock car requires more cunning and stamina. Stock-car drivers respect Indy-car drivers because they recognize driving an Indy car requires more finesse and courage.

I didn't want to get out of the car. I wanted something exciting to happen.

"If the engine had blown from that cracked head, we might have gotten a squirt of water on the right rear tires and spun into the wall," Parsons said. I wondered where my fingers would have been. I had been so comfortable I don't believe I had even been gripping the roll cage, but had been resting my elbow on the bar as if it had been an armrest.

"Those were nice, comfortable laps," said Benny. "I could do that all day, no sweat."

Me, too.

END

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'LEARNED IN ALL THE LORE OF OLD MEN'

Hiawatha was Sault Ste. Marie's first legend, but nowadays the town hero is a teen-aged hockey phenom named Wayne Gretzky, who plays with a maturity far beyond his years

by E. M. SWIFT

More than 7,000 people—the largest hockey crowd of the season in Canada's capital—came to the Ottawa Civic Center one night last month to get to the bottom of a 16-year-old wunderkind who plays for the Sault Ste. Marie (Ont.) Greyhounds. His name is Wayne Gretzky. That's with a Zed-K-Y, please. The immigration guy fouled it up when his grandfather came over from Russia. In Peterborough the next night, the same thing happened: largest crowd of the year even though the last-place Greyhounds provided the opposition. The night after that, it was the same story in Hamilton: first sellout of the year for a Junior A game, and in a blizzard to boot, everyone out getting stuck in the snow to see some kid called The Great Gretzky, whom every paper in Ontario has hailed as the next Bobby Orr since he was eight years old, 4' 4" and 70 pounds.

Gretzky is not just another star of the future. He is there, Canada's answer to Steve Cauthen and Nadia Comaneci, one of those rare youths who leapfrogs the stage where they speak of potential, whose talent is already front and center, which, incidentally, is the position he plays for the Greyhounds. Gretzky is only a rookie in the Ontario Junior A Major Hockey Association (OHA), a league in which the players range in age from 16 to 20, but he has exploded onto the Junior scene like no one since Guy Lafleur—and before that Orr. If Wayne Gretzky were never to play another hockey game, thousands of Canadian kids would remember him into their dotage. He is the stuff of their dream—that, lacking size, lacking strength, lacking speed, they, too, can somehow make it.

Gretzky did. He now is a wiry (read "skinny") 155 pounds spread over 5' 11", but he should fill out enough to keep the pros happy. Gretzky describes his speed as "brutal"—meaning slower than slow. All the speed in the family went to his 14-year-old sister Kim, the Ontario Dominion champion in the 100-, 200- and 400-meter dashes and a good bet to represent Canada in the 1980 Olympics. Gretzky's shot is accurate, but far from overpowering. And if you expect to see him mucking it up in the cor-



ners, forget it. Still, without question, he is the most exciting Junior hockey player since Lafleur left Quebec City in 1971.

"They compare me to Orr and Lafleur, and that's very flattering," says Gretzky in his best "shucks, who, lil-ol-me?" tone. "But basically, my style is different from anyone else's." True. Nevertheless, despite the qualifier, Gretzky lives quite comfortably with comparisons involving himself and Orr, Lafleur or any other superstar who comes to mind, including Cauthen. "We're both little runts who get a lot of publicity," Gretzky says of the latter.

Gretzky's talent is all in his head. "He's the smartest kid I've ever seen," says Fred Litzen, Sault Ste. Marie's one-eyed head scout who has seen a passel of talent over 40 years, even if he has missed half, as his friends suggest. Gretzky knows not only where everyone is on the ice, but he also knows where they're going. Uncanny anticipation, people call it.

While Gretzky's straight-ahead speed is something less than overwhelming, his mobility makes him nearly impossible to check, and his quickness—"Oh God, he's got terrific reflexes," says Litzen—makes him a superb forechecker in the mold of Bobby Clarke, the player after whom Gretzky models himself the most. Right now, Gretzky has a knack with the puck equal to anyone's, at any level. "From the red line to their net I play a solid game compared to anyone in the NHL," he says. And somehow such a statement from a 16-year-old does not have a cocky ring. It shouldn't, because it's true.

Defensively? Well, let's just say that one of the reasons Junior A hockey—the final step before the pros—is fun is that the games are often "Bombs-away LeMay" affairs. Gretzky does not return to his own zone to cover a man, he goes there only because without the puck he cannot start a rush. No one particularly worries about his defensive work, least of all Gretzky, who seems as aware as anyone that covering the opposing center is not apt to make headlines. As Greyhound Coach Muzz MacPherson says, "With a kid his age, you don't take away his puck sense and tell him to play defense. He's got plenty of time for that."

One reason for the big commotion over Gretzky last month was his play in the World Junior Championships that were held in and around Montreal over

the Christmas holidays. The youngest player in the eight-nation field, Gretzky led all scorers with 17 points (eight goals, nine assists) in six games. Team Canada, however, finished a disappointing third, behind the Soviet Union and Sweden. Gretzky was the host country's only representative on the all-tournament team and became, if not a national hero, something of a national curiosity in a hockey-mad nation.

Leading scorer at 16? Who is this Gretzky guy?

Dan Lucas, Gretzky's right wing in Sault Ste. Marie, was also paired briefly with him on Team Canada. "He would come in and boast to all those older guys how he was going to score four or five points against the Czechs or something," Lucas says. "I'd shake my head and think, 'What are you saying, kid?' Then he'd go out and get them. Unreal. I've had things go well for me before, but with him it never stops. If he ever has a comeuppance, it's going to be a dandy."

It has been that way pretty much for Gretzky since he was five. That year he made the Brantford, Ontario novice all-star team, a squad usually made up of 10- and 11-year-olds. That led to an interview with the local television station at age six, a Toronto Globe and Mail feature at eight, a film clip on national television at nine. His career as a media darling was rolling. At 11 he scored 378 goals in 68 games, including three in 45 seconds in the third period of a game in which Brantford trailed 3-0. The legend grew, far faster than the boy.

After being the third player selected in the midjet draft held by the OHA last spring, Gretzky was expected to need time to adjust to the rougher, faster pace of the mother lode of North American hockey. He didn't. He scored a hat trick in his first game with Sault Ste. Marie, and has been at the top of the OHA scoring race ever since. In his first 48 games (68 games) and may well break the OHA record of 170 points now held by Mike Kaszycki of the New York Islanders.

From the day Walter Gretzky strapped skates on his 2½-year-old son Wayne and shoved him onto the flooded backyard

rink, a comeuppance just hasn't been in the cards.

Harry Wolfe is the voice of the Soo Greyhounds. He shouts at his microphone with such vengeance that his broadcasts can be comfortably listened to while, say, running a bath. "In 25 years in this business," says Harry in a quieter moment, "I have never seen a kid capture the imagination of the Canadian public like Wayne Gretzky."

Harry knows all about capturing imaginations. Ask him to rate Gretzky, and he's apt to tell you that the kid is the best Junior hockey player since Harvey Keck. That's K-E-C-K, and no immigration guy fouled the name up—he's part Indian. Plays for the Melkita Purple Raiders. A professional scout once heard Harry talking about Harvey Keck and went so far as to get directions to Melkita, which requires a dog sled and a clear night even in summer. A compass won't work that far north.

Keck's only weakness is that he's fictitious. "Hardest shot in hockey, and so fast he can play tennis with himself," says Wolfe. Harry has been threatening to show Keck to his listeners for the past quarter century. "Looks like it's time to bring up Harvey Keck," he will say on the air whenever the Soo Greyhounds are floundering, a pretty regular occurrence in the six years they've been a major Junior A franchise. When Harry gets into a town, the first question he asks the bus driver is: "Harvey Keck still playing as well as he used to?" Most of them will nod and point to the sign that reads PLEASE DON'T TALK TO THE DRIVER. One, however, recently startled Harry by informing him that Keck had broken his leg and was out for the year.

"The sad thing about all of this," Harry says, "is that night after night it becomes the Wayne Gretzky Show. The team's taken a backseat."

Although the Greyhounds were in the cellar, they trailed fifth-place Sudbury by just a point as they began their recent swing through Ottawa, Peterborough and Hamilton. But they were beaten 9-5, 8-5 and 9-3 on consecutive nights, extending their losing streak to six and making their playoff prospects dimmer. One would never know it to see the press flock into the dressing room after the games.

"It's embarrassing to the other guys,"

continued

says Angelo Bumbacco, the Soo's general manager, pointing to the crowd of reporters around his star. "We've got to put a stop to this. Let him hold a press conference in another room."

Gretzky is a natural showman. When his favorite number—9—was not available this season, he ended up wearing 99. "I tried 14 and 19 at first, but the 1's didn't feel quite right on my back," Gretzky says. "The 99 was Muzz's idea."

Muzz, an ex-goalie of no great renown, must have been sensitive to the burden of wearing a 1 on one's back. Born Mur-



No speed skater. Gretzky dazzles with Anesee

ray MacPherson, Muzz has been called Muzz so long that he looks like a Muzz. He is a cheerful bowling ball of a man and a practiced referee baiter. Fans battle for seats behind the Greyhound bench to hear him carry on:

"Mike? Mike? Dandy call, Mike. Just tell me one time why that looked like a charge to you when the same play 10 seconds ago didn't. Tell me that, Mike. Mike, I know you're not a homer. Don't look at me like I'm calling you a homer, Mike. You homer! Who said that?"

Muzz' hand, pudgy by nature, is swollen as round as a hockey puck from punching a railing during a recent loss.

"Why not give him 99?" he shrugs. "He wanted it. The kid was going to be a marked man anyway. The way he plays, are you kidding?"

To be a marked man in Junior is not a terrific honor. For every player trying to make it into the pros as a goal scorer, there are five or six trying to get there because they can hit people into next week. Then there are the delightful few who don't worry much about next week, concentrating instead on, oh, the next three months in the hospital. Gretzky, so elusive on skates that he is nearly impossible to tag with a hard check, is subject to slashings across the wrists and legs that leave them a mass of welts after each game. Three times this season he has gone to the hospital for postgame X rays.

"It scares me to think there might be some big son of a gun who is just out there on the ice to try to get me out of the game," Gretzky admits. "Guys are always telling me that the next time I touch the puck, they're going to stuff their sticks down my throat. What can you do? You've got to go ahead and tough it and hope they were kidding."

The Greyhounds have loaded their bags onto a chartered, 30-year-old DC-3 Sault Ste. Marie is situated in Ontario approximately the way El Paso is in Texas, and the Hounds are the only OHA team to travel by plane. Next to Sudbury, which is a 186-mile stone's throw away, Sault Ste. Marie's nearest opponent in the 12-city OHA is 423 miles yonder.

The crew is late, but has carefully remembered to prop open the plane's door in the sub-zero cold. The interior of the DC-3 is lined with the recycled aluminum of old ice chests, and the players huddle in the seats like cubes in a tray. To pass the time, Muzz relates the story of the four-hour roller-coaster flight they took in November of 1975, the day the freighter *Edmund Fitzgerald* sank in a Lake Superior gale. "Thought I was a goner," he says.

"Hey, Boy Wonder," someone yells. "Make some more headlines. Fly us out of here. I'm freezin'!"

Gretzky is used to the flak. He enjoys it, as he enjoys all the attention showered on him. It is a system of checks and balances devised by his teammates so that all the hoopla doesn't go to his head.

Earlier in the year, on a day he was scheduled for a television interview, Gretzky lost an eyebrow and some other, less visible hair to the razors of the

Soo veterans. They also loaded his hair with Vaseline. The kid had been initiated. Undaunted, Gretzky had Sylvia Bodner, whose family he lives with in Sault Ste. Marie, apply her eyeliner to his brow and use steam, detergent, lemonade and Bromo—"Kind of made my scalp sore"—to remove the Vaseline in time for the evening news. In another ploy, the team had the Soo police arrest Gretzky for streaking. "I've got to call my agent," he pleaded. He was innocently sitting in the back of the team bus in his shorts and sneakers when the police arrived. And in Ottawa a teammate, masquerading as a press secretary, phoned and asked Gretzky to lunch with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Gretzky took a rain check, explaining that he had to eat a training meal.

"He's got this Boy Wonder thing under control," says Bumbacco, the man who selected Gretzky in the midget draft, even after receiving a letter from Walter Gretzky, an employee of Bell Telephone in Brantford, in which he said he wouldn't let his son play that far from home. "I told Mr. Gretzky we were running a business, and if Wayne was available, we'd take him. Then I had to fly to Brantford and convince him to come."

He did so, but not without the help of Jim and Sylvia Bodner, friends of the Gretzkys from Brantford who had moved to the Soo four years before. "I called up Mr. Gretzky," says Mrs. Bodner, "and it was such a relief to him that Wayne could live with people that he knew. Wayne's father wants so much to be a part of everything that Wayne's going through, and he can't. I know it's hard for him."

For a general manager, Bumbacco is not a dollars-and-cents type. However, as he says, "In dollars and cents, I'd say without Gretzky we'd be averaging 1,100 to 1,200 people per game. With him, we're averaging 2,500."

Bumbacco has been managing one team or another in Sault Ste. Marie for more than 30 years. Seventy of the players who grew up under him have gone on to college on scholarships, and 14 have ended up in professional hockey, among them Chico and Wayne Maki, Lou Nanne, Ivan Boldirev and—the local legends—Tony and Phil Esposito.

"People told me the same thing about Phil that they tell me about Gretzky: 'He can't skate,'" says Bumbacco. "Sure, I tell them. 'You're absolutely right. He

continued

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can't skate a lick. All he can do is score goals."

The Grtche Gumees—Lake Superior—is an eerie white wasteland in winter. Freighters like the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, loaded with ore from the Algoma Steel plant, crunch through the channel cut out of the ice in Whitefish Bay. The city of 80,000 is as flat as the frozen waterways around it, and its rows of Monopoly-board houses are broken up only by the billowing smokestacks of the mill and Abitibi Pulp and Paper. It is here that the waters of Lake Superior, boiling into rapids, start their journey to the Atlantic.

Hiawatha was Sault Ste. Marie's first legend, back when the Ojibway nation called that stretch of the river "Pauwawing." He wasn't much for hockey, but some of Longfellow's descriptions make Hiawatha sound like something of a cross between Gretzky and Harvey Keck.

*Out of childhood into manhood
Now had grown Hiawatha...
Learned in all the lore of old men,
In all youthful sports and
pastimes...
He could shoot an arrow from him,
And run forward with such
fleetness,
That the arrow fell behind him!*

Sam Turco is at the Sault Memorial Gardens the night Gretzky's Greyhounds, as the Sault Ste. Marie team has been dubbed, try to break a seven-game winless streak in a game against Peterborough. He sits in the same seat he has occupied for 30 years, right behind the visitor's bench. Sam came over from Italy in 1912 and worked 25 years at Algoma Steel before he lost his leg to a hangnail that led to gangrene and forced him to start driving a cab.

Sam's got a handshake that Gordie Howe will be hardpressed to match at 72. "Ain't afraid of man nor devil," he says with a quick, hollow rap on his wooden leg. Another night Sam glowers down at Hamilton Coach Bert Templeton. "Cut out that cheap stuff, Bert!" Sam threatens. Rap, rap. "The one hit is fine, but that second shot's cheap stuff!"

A Hamilton forward has just tripped Gretzky against the boards and, surprised to have him pinned, rams the kid's face against the glass for good measure.

"Got to run into him once in a while, Sam," the coach answers with a

smile. "Don't get a chance very often."

"That's cheap stuff, Bert, and you know it!" Rap, rap. "I like to give it to Bert. He's all right."

Sam sits back. "See all them little guys?" he says, pointing to the mobs of youngsters in their team jackets. "They only come to see the kid. There wasn't a one here when he was off playing in that Junior tournament in Montreal."

Ross Winslade, headmaster at Sir James Dunn School, which Gretzky and most of the other Greyhound players attend, is also at the game. He has a far better attendance record at the rink than they do at the school. "We've got to be honest with ourselves. They're here to play hockey," he says. "Their education is second. We do what we can." He pauses.

"Gretzky?" he says. "He's an unassuming kid who's doing a helluva job right now just rolling with the punches. I don't worry about his hand of pressure. In a year or so he'll be in my office talking about more money than I'll make the rest of my life."

"The other kids, the fringe players, are the ones with the pressures. They come to a town, settle in a school, then in two months are traded away. They're living out their parents' dreams of glory, maybe, hoping they'll be drafted by the pros—then when they're not, where does that leave them? They're the ones with pressure."

Every year about this time, some of the Greyhounds come into Muzz' office and ask him in what round he thinks they'll be drafted. Most of them won't be picked in any round. "Muzz'll tell them the only draft they'll get is on their butts as they walk out the door," says Tom McLeod, himself a fringe player now in his draft year. "So you try it as a free agent, and if you're not good enough for that, you try the International League."

"And if you're not good enough for that, you go back to Sudbury and be a miner," adds Rich Duguay, who, like McLeod, has been traded twice since the season's opening.

Gretzky is a lucky one. The luckiest of the lucky ones. Right now, the National Hockey League and the World Hockey Association have an agreement with the Junior leagues not to draft any players before they complete their Ju-

nior careers at the age of 20. For Gretzky, that will be 1981. But there is very little chance—make that zero chance—he will have to wait that long. His agent, Gus Bodali, specializes in procuring six-figure contracts for underage Juniors. Wayne Dillon (now with the New York Rangers), John Tonelli (Houston Aeros) and Mark Napier (Birmingham Bulls) all signed with the WHA while being represented by Bodali. And the talent-hungry, publicity-starved WHA will require little arm-twisting to bid for Gretzky. Last September, for instance, Birmingham ignored the established rules of drafting and signed 18-year-old Ken Linseman to a lucrative contract.

The only serious questions are whether the pro leagues will wait until the kid is 18 (Gretzky turned 17 on Jan. 26) and how long and how lucrative his contract will be. Birmingham owner John Bessen, notorious for signing underage Juniors (Linseman, for one), has already waited nine years. He was an executive with CFTO television when he saw Gretzky play in a tournament among 8-year-olds.

Gretzky would like to play one more year at the Soo for his \$75 a week. "After that, I think I'd be bored," he admits. "Mentally, I'm ready for the pros right now, but physically I'm not."

The kid is putting on a show for the home crowd. He scores five points as the Greyhounds beat Peterborough 6-3, avenging the previous week's road loss.

Sam Turco hollers with glee and goes into an ice dance, pumping his right elbow and his right knee. "Trouble with hockey today," yells Sam over the noise of the crowd. "Is nobody has any fun out there on the ice. Too professional. All these guys want to do is make money. That darn kid has fun, now, don't he?" Rap, rap. "I been here in this seat 30 years, and he stands alone. Yessir. Stands alone. Don't he, Bert! Hee-haw-haw. Don't he!" Rap, rap. "I'm going to have the kid over for a home-cooked dinner some night, and what more can you say about a person than you'd like to have him eat under your own roof. He stands alone, that one."

*All the village came and feasted,
All the guests praised Hiawatha,
Called him Strong-Heart, Soom-go-tah!
Called him Loon-Heart, Mahn-go-taysee!*

Loco about the Lobos once more

A pack of transfers has New Mexico fans howling, not for blood but with joy

Pace and love have returned to the University of New Mexico basketball team. Players are no longer trying to escape into the desert, and fans have stopped trying to hang Coach Norm Ellenberger by his turquoise necklace. Albuquerque is loco over the Lobos once again.

New Mexico, which leads the nation in scoring and junior-college transfers, beat Arizona and Arizona State last week before two 18,000-plus crowds at University Arena. The 103-85 and 103-92 victories kept the Lobos undefeated in the Western Athletic Conference and ran their overall record to a grumpy 19-2. Their postseason prospects are equally dazzling, because the NCAA West Regional next month will be played on their home court. "I think about it every day," says Ellenberger.

Ellenberger could have worse things on his mind. Two years ago six black players criticized his coaching strategy, made the customary charge of racial prejudice and left the team before the final game, never to return. Late last season 3,000 fans signed a petition demanding he be fired. Despite these crises, Ellenberger had respectable records of 16-11 in '75-'76 and 19-11 in '76-'77 and assembled the personnel so important to this season's success. "I'm proud of what we've done, because I was in a corner," he says. "People who were stabbing me in the back are now patting me on the back. I just smile and say, 'Thank you,' but I still remember."

Ellenberger is not easy to forget. His hair is long, his shirts are open, and his

neck, wrists and fingers are adorned with gold, silver and turquoise jewelry. Though his age, which is almost a state secret in New Mexico, is 46, he looks a hip 36 and acts a swinging 26. He does not talk, he "raps." He does not enjoy the mountain scenery around Albuquerque, he "dags" it. "I can't fit in the mold that everybody expects of a coach," he says. "I can't be a hypocrite. I may stick out a little bit here, but in California I'd blend in with all the other freaks."

Despite his free-and-easy style and his investments in a racquetball court and an apartment complex, Ellenberger insists that "nothing I do detracts from my job." When the program suffered the last two seasons, he suffered with it. Only now can he joke that "I have my narrow tie and wing-tipped shoes in a box at home in case I ever need to find another job."

Ellenberger's future at New Mexico now seems secure because he and Assistant Coach John Whisenant have brought in nine junior-college players the last two years. That is a bumper crop even by the standards of the WAC, in which the ideal of recruiting four-year student-athletes has rarely been allowed to stand in the way of building a good basketball program. "I had to go to the jaycees because I needed people who could help us right away," Ellenberger says. "When you have 18,000 seats to fill every game, you can't have a rebuilding year. So we've done in a very short time what it takes most schools three or four years to do."

The New Mexico coaches have had plenty of aggravation in the process. For a long while last season it looked as if Ellenberger's imports were typical junior-college problem children on and off the court. One, Flenol Crook, split before he ever put on a practice jersey. Two others, Michael Cooper and Jimmy Allen, went AWOL during preseason drills. A fourth, Marvin Johnson, left, came back and then refused to suit up for the first game. When the transfers finally took the court, it was ev-

ery man for himself. "We needed five balls," says Johnson, the team's leading scorer the last two seasons. "We were all looking at each other cross-eyed." Cooper, the No. 2 scorer, admits, "I'd take the ball and say, 'Hey, everybody, look at me.'"

Ellenberger was dissatisfied with the team's 19-11 record, because he knew he had the talent to do better. "There was never any stability on the court," he says. "It always had to come from the coaches." Two moves set the team on the right track this season. Instead of putting the clumps on Johnson and Cooper, Ellenberger created instant leadership by naming them co-captains. And he signed up the best little man in junior-college basketball, 5'10" Russell Saunders of Pensacola, to be the playmaker New Mexico needed. From the same school came 6'5" Phil Abney to provide depth at forward.

The acquisition of Abney seemed all



Once he decided to stay, Johnson became the Lobos' leading scorer and rebounder

the more important when another of the team's free spirits, Willie Howard, left school last spring because he felt he could not play basketball and support a wife at the same time. But after much deliberation, Howard came up with a most remarkable solution: he divorced his wife. Now he is back to basketball; he and Abbey split the playing time and 27 points a game at one forward spot.

Ellenberger needs this kind of depth for his free-substituting, fast-paced style of play. Eight of his former jaycees are averaging at least 16 minutes a game, six have between five and six rebounds and four are scoring in double figures. As a team, New Mexico is pouring in 101.6 points a game, easily the highest in the nation, and playing enough defense to outscore its opponents by an average of 16.4 points. The Lobos have lost only to Southern Cal and Syracuse and have set five attendance records on the road and another at home.

Depth is the main reason the Lobos are within five games of becoming the first WAC team to go unbeaten in the league's 16-year history. And with the home-court advantage in the West Regionals, they also seem capable of a more significant conference accomplishment by making the NCAA's final four. Only one WAC team (Utah) has ever gone that far, although three league members (Wyoming in 1943, Utah in 1944 and UTEP in 1966) won the NAAs before they were members of the WAC.

To get to the final four, a team needs more than depth, and New Mexico has that extra edge in the individual brilliance of Johnson and Cooper. Johnson, a 6' 5" forward, leads the Lobos in scoring (23.4), rebounding (6.5) and free-throw shooting (75%), and he set a school record with 46 points against Kentucky State. But Cooper, a 6' 5" guard, is considered the better all-round player. He averages 17.1 points and six rebounds and is more skilled than Johnson at the defensive end of the court. Neither was highly recruited out of high school, but each developed fast in junior college. Johnson at Howard College in Big Spring, Texas and Cooper at Pasadena City College in California.

Johnson took a winding route from his hometown of DeRidder, La. to the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico. Because he had played only one year in high school, his first stop was junior col-

lege. After a season there, he enrolled at Southwestern Louisiana, but returned to Howard without playing a game. After his second JC season, Johnson was on the verge of going to Washington State when he decided "the vibes weren't right." Instead, he signed a Missouri Valley Conference letter of intent with New Mexico State, changed his mind again and agreed to go to Tulsa of the same league. He spent the summer of '76 working in Tulsa, then suddenly returned home. "I knew I wanted to play somewhere, but I didn't know where," he says. "I was afraid of becoming an outlaw."

When Johnson went back to Louisiana, Whisenant set out after him. Persistence has always been one of Whisenant's strong points—in 1974 he spent a month living in Petersburg, Va. while trying to recruit Moses Malone—and this time his dedication paid off. After flying to New Mexico in Whisenant's plane, Johnson enrolled in school. And he practiced with the Lobos, even while entertaining new offers from Washington State and Tulsa to transfer one more time.

"People were really messing up my mind about the problems that had gone on here at New Mexico," says Johnson in explaining his final bout with indecisiveness, "and I didn't know if I should commit myself by playing. That's why I didn't dress for the first game last year. But then the other guys on the team convinced me to stay, and I'm glad I did. Everything has worked out the way I hoped it would." Ellenberger would say amen to that.

THE WEEK

(Feb. 6-12)

By BRUCE NEWMAN

MIDEAST Jordy Hulberg, Willie Sims, Ernest Brown, Rick Matrick, Floyd Bailey—those are five names not likely to make an opposing coach nervous enough to gnaw on his clipboard. But when the final horn sounded and Louisiana State had defeated top-ranked Kentucky 95-94 in overtime, those were the LSU players on the floor. The Tigers' entire starting five had fouled out before the bitterly contested game was over, so it was up to players like Sims, a freshman guard, to carry LSU through the final minutes. He hit three free

throws in the final 27 seconds of overtime to nail down the victory for the unranked Tigers. "It must have been back in the Stone Age that five subs lost beat the nation's No. 1 team," said an exultant Dale Brown, the LSU coach.

The Tigers had lost to Kentucky by 20 points last month in Lexington, but poured in their first 14 shots in the second half this time. Starters Kenny Higgs and Darand Macklin were the first to foul out, and they were soon joined by DeWayne Scales, who had 17 rebounds when he departed with nine minutes to play. Another LSU starter fouled out in the regulation period, and the fifth sat down two minutes into overtime. Kentucky lost starters Kyle Macy and Rick Robey and sub Lavon Williams to fouls. About midway through the second half, Brown decided to put the Tigers in a four-corner offense. "We didn't have the four-corners in our game plan," he said, "and we worked on it only 15 minutes in practice. We had to stop playing Kentucky and start playing that electronic monster hanging up there over the court."

Earlier in the week, Kentucky clubbed Auburn 104-81. Sixth man James Lee scored 25 for the Wildcats in that game, and later Coach Joe B. Hall was asked why he does not start Lee. "Things are going so well, why change now?" he replied.

Butch Lee of Marquette, whose fans claim that he, not Phil Ford of North Carolina, is the country's best guard, looked the part in the Warriors' defeat of Creighton and Air Force. The 6' 1" All-American hit 13 of 17 shots and scored 30 points in an 82-57 posting of the Bluejays. "Everything we tried to do, Lee countered," said Creighton Coach Tom Apke. "Attacking the full-court press, making the fine passes, and so many other things—he did them all." Former Warner Coach Al McGuire calls such games "BLT"—Butch Lee Time—and BLT became more popular than the Quaker Pounder in Milwaukee after Lee pumped in 24 points in a 76-59 drubbing of Air Force.

Michigan State took a one-game lead in the Big Ten race by beating Michigan 73-62. The Wolverines had won 10 of the previous 11 games between the two schools, and after Michigan's 65-63 victory over State earlier this month, Wolverine Coach Johnny Orr danced onto the floor in East Lansing and blew kisses at the Spartan fans. This time Orr watched Spartan superfreshman Ervin Johnson score 25 points, grab eight rebounds and deal out spic assets. Said Orr of Ervin, "I'd like to see him turn pro."

The Spartans made it a perfect week by also beating Iowa 71-70. Hawkeye Coach Lute Olson was upset about the officiating—he felt the refs should have called more than one technical foul on Michigan State Coach Jud Heathcote for his sideline antics—and said, "Dang it, we were not intimidated. The

continued

officials were intimidated. Is there one standard of officiating for first-division teams and another for second-division teams?"

Elsewhere in the hectic Big Ten, Minnesota took over second place from Purdue, which was beaten 65-64 by Indiana and 91-77 by Ohio State. Gopher Center Mychal Thompson scored a season high of 34 points in the Gophers' 78-65 victory over Iowa. Although Minnesota cannot go to a postseason tournament because of an NCAA suspension, it can gain a measure of satisfaction by winning the conference. The Gophers may do just that, because, unlike Michigan State's, their toughest remaining games are at home.

Notre Dame had its 22-game home winning streak snapped by DePaul when the Blue Demons' Gary Garland made a 23-footer with three seconds to play in overtime for a 69-68 victory. That brought DePaul's record to 20-2, while Notre Dame's fell to 16-4.

Tennessee's women's team, ranked second in the AIAW, knocked off No. 1 LSU 86-68. The Lady Vols shot 61% in the first half and used a pressure defense to upset the BenGals. "We knew we had to get in their uniforms right from the start," said Tennessee Coach Pat Head.

1. KENTUCKY (17-2)

2. MARQUETTE (19-2) 3. MICH. ST. (18-3)

MIDWEST Things were getting to the point where I was talking to myself," said Missouri's 6'4" Forward Clay Johnson, switching from interior monologue to dialogue in celebration of his team's 74-52 upset of Nebraska. Johnson's trouble—a two-week shooting slump—began when he missed a last-second shot in a 56-55 loss to the Cornhuskers last month, but he broke out of it in the rematch. He scored 23 points, 17 of them in the first half, as the Tigers knocked Nebraska two games behind Kansas in the Big Eight race. Husker Coach Joe Cignamo had called Brian Banks "the best guard in the conference" after Banks had led Nebraska to a 63-50 victory over Kansas State earlier in the week, but Banks had an unimpressive 4-for-16 shooting performance against Missouri.

Two days before beating the Cornhuskers Missouri Coach Norm Stewart said his team had to "do something drastic, daring or devilish" to defeat Kansas. So the Tigers tried a variation on the four-corner offense and got ripped 72-52. "When Plan A, our spread, didn't work," said Stewart, "we had to go to Plan B, whatever that was. It didn't work either." Said Jayhawk Guard John Douglas of Missouri's tactic, "I thought they might go into a four-corner if they got ahead by six or seven, but I never thought they'd stay in it after falling 13 or 14 behind."

Kansas solidified its hold on the conference lead by handing Kansas State 75-63 in the 186th renewal of a series that has lately

taken on a food motif. Four weeks ago Kansas fans pelted K-State's Curtis Redding with hot dogs when he was introduced in Lawrence. Not to be outdone, K-Staters showered the Jayhawks with overripe bananas instead of slipping. Kansas peeled freshman Wilmore (Little Moel Fowler of the bench. He hit eight straight baskets and scored 18 points.

When Rice Coach Mike Schuler made 99 substitutions last month against Texas, Longhorn Coach Abe Lemons said, "All they need are a few clowns to make a circus." When Texas visited the Owls last week, about 75 Rice students showed up in clown costumes, riding unicycles and juggling lemons behind the Texas bench. Lemons—the coach, not the fruit—wasn't shook up. "I was in the war with the Japanese and the Germans," he said. "After that, a few clowns aren't going to bother me." The Longhorns also hit 38 of 42 free throws, which didn't hurt.

Arkansas won an 89-79 squeaker at Texas A&M and then had an easier time at Texas Christian, where the Hogs shot 66.7% and used a full-court press to run down the Horned Frogs 77-57.

Florida State defeated Memphis State twice in crucial home-and-home meetings between two of the Metro 7's best. The Seminoles won the first game 95-89 at Memphis, before returning home for an 89-82 victory. Harry Davis totaled 54 points for Florida State, which maintained its half-game lead over Louisville in the conference race. The Cardinals stayed in the thick of things by beating Tulane 115-86 and St. Louis 63-61. The Billikens are only 5-16 and winless in the Metro, but Louisville Coach Dennis Crum called St. Louis "the best five-win team in the country." And it might be just that, having lost six of its games by a total of only 10 points.

An 83-82 victory over Indiana State briefly put New Mexico State in the Missouri Valley lead with a 9-3 record, while the Cyclones—the preseason favorites to win the league title—dropped to 6-4. But subsequent losses to West Texas State (90-73) and Bradley (103-85) dropped the Aggies half a game behind Creighton, which beat Drake (71-63) and Wichita State (80-76).

1. ARKANSAS (23-1)

2. KANSAS (20-3) 3. LOUISVILLE (16-3)

EAST North Carolina played three tough road games in the space of five days and after surviving the first two, got burned at Providence 61-59. Behind by six points with 4:35 remaining, the Friars rallied to win on a short jumper by Forward Bill Eason with 21 seconds left. The Tar Heels escaped a bushwhacking against fired-up Maryland when Carolina Coach Dean Smith sent the Heels into their four-corner offense with 13:30 to play and the score

stood. Thereafter Guard Phil Ford hit 11 of 15 shots and directed traffic. After losing 66-64, Terp Coach Lefty Driesell growled, "I'd sure like to play them 40 minutes of straight-up basketball."

A few days later Rutgers got the opportunity to do just that before the largest college basketball crowd (19,694) in the history of Madison Square Garden. But with Ford running an exquisite fast-break offense and directing a sniping defense, the Heels jumped on the Scarlet Knights 74-57. Forward Mike O'Koren had five steals, and Ford got 20 points despite a case of the flu. Rutgers Center James Bailey jammed in 19 points but got no support from his teammates.

In the other half of the Garden double-header, St. John's streaked to its seventh straight victory, running away from Duquesne 84-69. Forward George Johnson pumped in 23 points for the Redmen before spraining an ankle early in the second half. That win brought St. John's record to 16-4.

The word around the ACC is that Duke is the best team in the league—North Carolina or no North Carolina—when its outstanding sophomore Center Mike Gminsky is in the lineup. "Big Mike means an awful lot to us," says Duke Coach Bill Foster. That was clear to Virginia after it had been duked out 100-75. With Gminsky disabled by an injured big toe, the Blue Devils had lost two of their previous three games, but they played against the Cavaliers, getting the opening tip, scoring on a hook shot 13 seconds into the game and hitting seven of eight shots all told. The Blue Devils also dumped Davidson 104-88.

No sooner had Wake Forest plowed through the ACC's three ranked teams (North Carolina, Duke and Virginia) without a loss than the Deacons were beaten by Clemson 91-81. Wake Forward Leroy McDonald, who was shooting 65% until his one-for-eight performance against Clemson, was philosophical. "They just weren't dropping for me this time," he said. "You have these nights."

Virginia Coach Terry Holland had predicted it would be dog-eat-dog when the Cavs met Virginia Tech. "I hope everybody has had his rabies shot," he said. Virginia, it turned out, had all the bite in the championship game of the Richmond Times-Dispatch tournament. "That's about as well as we've played this year," said Holland after his team had won a 76-68 victory that was easier than the score indicated.

Georgetown ended the nation's longest Division I winning streak at 12 by defeating Detroit 83-82. There were 30 lead changes in the game before the Hoyas' Craig Shelton won it by stealing a Detroit pass and following up his own missed shot to score with 28 seconds remaining.

Syracuse defeated West Virginia 74-73.

1. NORTH CAROLINA (20-0)

2. DUKE (17-5) 3. ST. JOHN'S (16-4)

continued

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COLLEGE BASKETBALL continued

WEST Nevada-Reno looked as if it had the deck stacked in its favor in the West Coast Athletic Conference race, but suddenly somebody shuffled the cards. The week started badly for the Wolf Pack when a Reno-based oddsmaker made second-place San Francisco a 1-40-3 favorite to win the WCAC championship, with Reno second at 3 to 1. St. Mary's made those odds look good by beating the Pack 86-76, dropping Reno half a game back of San Francisco. The Dons did their part by defeating Pepperdine 85-73 and Loyola Marymount 82-80.

St. Mary's Center Norm Kelly outplayed Reno's heralded Edgar Jones, and that was the edge the Gaels needed. Kelly scored 26 points, grabbed 10 rebounds and held Jones to 18 points. "I'm overjoyed and out of breath," he said after the teams traded full-court presses for most of the game.

Pepperdine Coach Gary Colson felt his team was an ungracious host to USF, which came bearing gifts. "They wanted to give a [the game] to us," said Colson, "but we wouldn't take it." While his teammates played poorly, the only thing San Francisco's Winford Boynes was giving was shooting lessons,

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

MYCHAL THOMPSON: In a pair of wins, the 6' 10" Minnesota center scored 58 points and grabbed 30 rebounds. Against Iowa he hit 15 of 20 shots and had 16 rebounds and eight assists. He is averaging 22.0 points.

as he hammered Pepperdine for 36 points. "I called time once there and wrote 34 [Boyne's number] as big as I could on the board," said Colson. "But the next time down we let him alone in the corner and—boom—two more."

The Dons' James Hardy, an All-America forward, broke his right thumb against Pepperdine and the next night showed up for a game with Loyola wearing a cast up to his elbow. "He's out, he won't be back," said USF Coach Bob Gaillard. "Now we have to regroup." The Dons wasted no time doing just that against the aroused Lions, getting 34 points from 7-foot Center Bill Cartwright, who connected on 13 of 14 shots.

UCLA moved within two wins of clinching at least a tie for the Pac-8 title by beating Cal 78-64 and Stanford 79-63. The Bruins' closest challenger, USC, lost to Cal 70-68.

While New Mexico continued to ride roughshod over the Western Athletic Conference (page 42), Utah and Brigham Young straggled along in second and third places. The Utes laid waste to Wyoming 95-73 and defeated Colorado State 76-67. BYU handled the Rams 95-81 and gunned down the Cowboys 76-56.

1. NEW MEXICO (19-2)
2. UCLA (16-2) 3. SAN FRANCISCO (18-5)

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Williwaw is giving them the willies

At the halfway mark of the SORC it looks like Dennis Conner and Williwaw in a breeze

Disturbed by a sagging entry list and rising costs, three years ago the management of the Southern Ocean Racing Conference attempted to attract sailors with old boats by dividing the annual competition into two sections: one for the expensive, new "grand prix" performers, and the other for hulls built before 1974. The idea, though sound, got nowhere. Three years ago the six SORC races drew 36 pre-1974 boats out of a fleet of 93. This year, in a comparable fleet, only 24 oldies showed up, and five of those elected to race in the new division.

Although cruising sailors often stay with their beloved boats until death does them part, racing skippers on the SORC use theirs like Kleenex. Out of the 93 hulls competing in the first three races of this year's series, only 27 are more than two years old. Forty of them are one-year-olds, making their debuts. Despite the efforts of management, the SORC remains a costly crashshoot where both seaworthiness and comfort are diminishing considerations. Cumulatively, the 40 new hulls cost about \$5 million. For such fancy money, one should expect ships well-

found enough to make it over the 1,100-odd miles of the SORC, but last month before the first race—a 130-miler from St. Petersburg to Boca Grande, Fla. and back—was over, nine of the high-priced freaks had been crippled, six of them so badly it dashed their chances of winning any overall honors.

The winds in the Boca Grande race ranged from 20 to 30 knots, the seas were short and steep—tricky going, but nothing to tax the limits of intelligently used ocean craft. Regardless, five boats were dismantled, and the spar of another so warped she was forced to limp home. Four of the suffering craft were two-ton-

ners built expressly for the Canada's Cup, a sort of desalinized America's Cup held every other year on the Great Lakes. If the fate of those four contenders in the SORC presages anything, and if Providence saves up a few summer squalls, this summer's Canada's Cup should be a gear-busting humdinger.

Mia VI, a prospective Canadian challenger for the cup, and *Agape*, a hopeful U.S. defender, were among those dismantled in the Boca race. *Black Magic*, another U.S. contender, struck something in the water. It was a glancing blow, a few feet forward of the shrouds, the impact barely jolting, the sound little more

continued



Class C boats leave Miami and head for the Bahamas on the first leg of the Ocean Triangle Race

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going over the side." Although most of her slicker rivals were back in action, *Love Machine* won again in the Ocean Triangle to hold her class lead and fourth in fleet scoring. *Mr. Jumpa* and *Requies* *Roost* kept first and second in the fleet, but *Mercury* lost her third place to a brand-new Class B boat of secondhand design, *Willwaw*, the sixth so named and campaigned by Seymore Smett. This *Willwaw* is skippered by Dennis Conner, the multifaceted sailor from San Diego.

Because in any race the weather may favor larger, faster boats over lesser rivals, or vice versa, three years ago the method of selecting an overall divisional winner was revised. Instead of ranking all boats from largest to smallest in order of their finishes in the six races, the prize now goes to the boat scoring best within its class. Conner had taken three consecutive firsts in his class, while the firsts in the other classes had been spread around, so at midpoint, in effect, he had

the overall trophy halfway in his pocket. But Conner is never a man to win one way when it is possible to win two ways at once. After each race he assiduously figured out his score under the old system. Noting that, old style, he lagged 23.5 points behind *Mr. Jumpa*, he was undismayed, declaring, "I feel as fat and happy as a pig in heaven. We can get those points back in the Miami-Nassau race."

While Conner was oozing confidence, the world's most famous self-appointed underdog, Ted Turner, was hanging onto first place in Class A by his fingernails. By virtue of his successful America's Cup in secondhand *Courageous* and his Congressional Cup victory in *Persephone*, the very first Cal-40 built 15 years ago, he was voted U.S. yachtsman for 1977 (As one observer noted, "He's more than the yachtsman for 1977. He's the secondhand yachtsman of all time.") Because his secondhand ocean racer *Tenacious* is six years old, Turner could

have had easy pickings in the old division, but he chose to mix it up with the hotshots. In the first race he took second to the 3-year-old *Congere*. In the next two he was second to a brand-new 51-footer, *Acadia*. But *Acadia* had carelessly busted three halyards in the Boca Inco and finished well down, so despite her two firsts Turner still had a 1½-point lead. Turner thrives on squeakers, and in this one, as he customarily does, he rallied himself and his comrades with open disparagement. "We may not be the best yachtsmen in the world," he said, "but we used to be."

What the final three races will bring for the pacesetters and also-rans depends on the weather and the common sense of the men who are driving these complicated machines to the very edge. For certain, the challenge is already spiced this year for half a dozen boats that exceeded the limit, forgetting the fundamental rule that before you can win, you have to finish.

END

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A KODAK SPORTS PROGRAM

He hasn't got the horse right there

But Darrel McHargue is running away with the great Santa Anita jockey race

Santa Anita's thoroughbred meeting has some of the most important winter racing in the world, but this year the focus not only is on the \$10 million offered in purses but also on a jockey colony of such extraordinary talent and depth that it resembles the Hall of Fame in Saratoga. Willie Shoemaker is there, trying to win his 18th Santa Anita riding championship. Also on hand are Laffit Pincay Jr., five times the nation's leading money-winner, and Sandy Hawley, who has led the land in wins four times since 1970. Steve Cauthen transferred his whip, saddle and halo from New York's frozen carousel to join such stars as Angel Cordero Jr., Fernando Toro and Don Pierce. Even France's premier jockey, Yves Saint-Martin, jumped into the competition.

By last weekend, though, the track's leading rider was neither Cauthen, Shoemaker, Pincay nor Hawley. It was 23-year-old Darrel McHargue, and he had turned the great jockey derby into a walk-over. McHargue was winning races out on the lead and coming off the pace; driving mounts through along the rail and looping fast fields on the outside. A jockey for five seasons, McHargue looked like the strongest rider to come out of Oklahoma since Geronimo. His 62 winners led second-place Cauthen by 26, and Cauthen himself was averaging a winner a day. McHargue also guided eight of his first 17 stakes mounts to the winner's circle and finished second five times.

McHargue's remarkable performance has drawn praise from racing people normally unimpressed by fast stars. Jimmy Jones, the trainer of storied Calumet Farm when it had herds of grand runners, said recently, "If I had that Calumet Farm stable today with horses like Citation, Countdown, Ponder, Bewitch and Two Lea, the stable jock would be Darrel McHargue." Eddie Arcaro, who rode out of that Calumet barn to victory after victory, says, "McHargue has every piece of equipment a race rider needs, and I'll be damned if I know

why he hasn't gotten much publicity."

McHargue is 5' 1", weighs 112 pounds, has flashing brown eyes, a fine sense of humor and a voice that cracks on occasion. With his Prince Valiant haircut he looks less like a jockey than any of the nation's top riders. "My family has no background in racing," he says. "My father is a mechanic, my two brothers work as an architect and an X-ray technician. My two sisters are housewives. I was up on my fourth horse as a kid back in Oklahoma City and didn't know where I was going. It was a quarter horse, and it threw me and my jaw got broken. During the time I was on the ground before I passed out, I remember saying to myself, 'Darrel, you better start taking riding horses seriously or you aren't going to be around too long.'"

This year McHargue is around the right horses in the right state at the right time. "Before Santa Anita opened," he says, "I read a lot about the amount of riding talent that would be here. The assumption was that for any rider to win the Santa Anita championship, the ball would have to roll his way. Nobody seemed to mention Darrel McHargue. Well, I was the ball out there that felt he could keep rolling."

Two weeks ago McHargue drew the mount on Mr. Redoy in the richest race run thus far in 1978, the \$230,200 Charles H. Strub Stakes. While he had ridden Mr. Redoy to victories twice in three outings, McHargue didn't feel he could win the Strub. "As the race came up," he says, "I figured that Mr. Redoy could finish third, probably no better. One morning when I was working the horse, I found that when another horse ran up inside of Mr. Redoy and threw stuff up in his face he would duck in toward the rail. To me that meant that he wanted to be way outside—clear of things inside him."

When the field of nine left the starting gate, McHargue put Mr. Redoy in second position and the 7-to-1 shot ran that way for a mile in the 1½-mile race. Favored J. O. Tobin moved in front, and ap-

proaching the mile marker the second betting choice, Text, came up inside Mr. Redoy. McHargue grabbed his horse and took him back to third.

McHargue let Text go by, then took Mr. Redoy wide and started his move. With a quarter of a mile remaining, McHargue sent Mr. Redoy even further outside and gained ground. First J. O. Tobin came back to him, then, when Text did a cha-cha-cha, McHargue had Mr. Redoy clear and he won by 2½ lengths. "I booked mounts for Darrel for five years," says agent Harry Haeckel, "and that was as chilly a ride as you'll see."

It has been a near-perfect year for McHargue—with one long-standing exception. "I'm still looking for that horse," he says. "Ron Turcotte found Secretariat, and the public identified with them. Bill Shoemaker had Round Table and Swaps; Arcaro had Nashua, Citation and Bold Ruler. Jean Crugnet had Seattle Slew. Sure, the money is important, but I'm looking for that horse. I believe that if you work and look hard enough you can find him."

continued



On a record-setting course, all McHargue lacks is a mount he—and history—can call his own

The closest McHargue has come so far is Run Dusty Run, who was second to Seattle Slew in the Derby and Belmont and finished third to Slew in the Preakness. "When I got off Run Dusty Run in the Derby," McHargue says, "there wasn't an excuse in the world. We just got beat. If we go around the track again, Seattle Slew wins it. Lost the Preakness and Belmont, too. Weren't going to win unless Slew fell down. In August I flew out of Del Mar to ride Run Dusty Run in the Travers at Saratoga."

"A lot of people seem to remember that race. It was on national television and we beat Jitski at the wire but got disqualified. When the race was over and Dusty's number came down, I was confused and bewildered. I couldn't walk back to the jocks' room because they knew that I was all out to win and the films would show that I had fooled."

The suspension that followed cost McHargue the Del Mar riding championship, but he came back to become the leading rider at Santa Anita's Oak Tree

meeting. "After that," he says, "I figure that any time a jockey has a chance to win a meeting championship he must go for it."

Not long ago McHargue flew to Hialeah to ride Run Dusty Run in a prep race for the \$100,000 Challenge Cup and Dusty ran down the track. "I had the option to ride Dusty back in the Challenge Cup," McHargue says, "but by that time I was 10 wins in front of Caution here and decided not to go. Don Brumfield rode a tremendous race on the horse and won." When Brumfield won the Seminole at Hialeah last Saturday on Dusty, McHargue remained philosophical about it. "This is the championship I want," he said.

McHargue is on a course that will smash the all-time riding records at Santa Anita. Is he a better rider than Caution? "Five years from now Steve Caution will look back at the kind of year he had in 1977 and marvel at it," says McHargue. "Heck, I do. Nobody ever did in one year what he did. But now he's

having some problems that I can understand. When I first came to California I was very lonely. Oh, the weather was fine, but I'd wake up and look out the window and each day was exactly the same. I had friends and family that I wanted to talk with back home, but there was the time difference and I was getting up at 5:30 in the morning and not getting home until late."

"If Steve was riding back in New York, he might be doing better than he did last year. He came out with Laz Barrera, and so far Laz has only done so-so because of bad weather. Also, I'm getting a better choice of horses. Owners here know that I'll stay around for the entire year, while Steve won't. That gives me an edge. Yet the reason Caution is in California is because he's staying close to that one horse that might give him the real identity every jockey truly looks for. He knows that his Derby horse is Affirmed, last year's 2-year-old champion, who is in California. I haven't found mine yet."

But he will.

END

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YOU CALL THIS A JOB?

BY DOUGLAS S. LOONEY





Salary is secondary because life is one big fringe benefit for Gene Montgomery, Key West fishing guide, as it is for Craig Spooner and Donna Dearborn, whose days on duty—at skiing and tennis—are a whole lot like our days off.



CONTINUED

JOBS

continued

They hear it all the time, this one recurring phrase. The wording may vary, but the delivery stays pretty much the same and the tone is always one of envious wonder. It is spoken on mountaintops and over cooling drinks after tennis. It comes as the fishing skiff ghosts to a stop in the Florida Keys. It is always the client who speaks.

This is what they all say: "And to think that you do this for a living."

There is a rumor going around that a young and single ski instructor leads an embarrassingly hedonistic life. He frolics in the sun and snow all day. He shows off in spare moments with freewheeling runs under the chair lifts for all to see and admire. Wealthy, admiring students invite him to parties and to dinner. And always, at the end of the day, there are the lovely girls anxious for his attention.

It has to be a rumor, you say. Not quite. The rumor is alive and well at Snowbird, Utah. His name is Craig Spooner, and whatever vision you have of a ski instructor is exactly what Craig Spooner is. Except, perhaps, his slightly crooked teeth. "Oh, the teeth," says Spooner. "God gave me crooked teeth so I wouldn't be too perfect."

While it might be possible to round up a few people who consider Spooner something slightly less than perfect, it would be difficult to think of a more perfect job. "I don't have any goals. I'm living my goals," says Spooner at 27. Indeed, Snowbird is one of the nation's top good-time ski resorts. It attracts the young and the rich and the happy. It is Spooner's kind of environment. The average snowfall is 450 inches. Aspen gets 145.

"But it's hard to work at a resort," Spooner says. "It's always a party and people want you to share their good times." Spooner tries. Sometimes he gets carried away trying. There was the romantic evening not long ago when he was entertaining a blonde visitor from Boston over a refreshing drink or two. Spooner somehow fell asleep under a coffee

table and awoke the next morning to find a note pinned to his ski sweater: "Nice to have met you."

A friend, Dave Lake, allows that "Craig has got a wild side to him. And a sane one." Another friend and instructor, Ole Olsen, says, "The great thing about Craig is that he can drink 24 cans of beer without barfing."

While Spooner is considered a major-league partygoer ("When I got here, the other instructors said they didn't party much. The next morning we all got up bleeding to death from our eyes"), he has found a way to rationalize his exuberant life in a postcard setting. "When people learn to ski, they feel better about themselves," he says. "As you go down a mountain, your heart is uplifted. So much in life we can't control because it involves others. But in skiing, nobody else holds your poles. I'm also contributing a lot because when secretaries come here on a fling I help them have fun. Then they go back to New York and work better, more productively. So, you see, old Craig Spooner is helping the national economy." Jimmy Carter must be grateful.

Spooner got into skiing as a 10-year-old when he found some funny-looking boards in the garage back home in West Boylston, Mass. He fell for the sport when he discovered that he could make parallel turns. While he was going to Assumption College, he landed a job at the Wachusett Mountain Ski School in Princeton, Mass., where he made \$5 an hour a few hours a week teaching skiing to a class of 10 youngsters. He was hooked. Especially when he realized what the other side of life could be like: he had a summer job in a leather factory. It involved putting a piece of cowhide into a machine every eight seconds for \$2.25 an hour. After six weeks, he told his parents, "If I'm going through college, I have to be sane. This is driving me crazy." He quit. But it was a job that laid the cornerstone of Spooner's philosophy: "I will never become bored with myself."

After graduation in 1972, when his friends were "all trying to think of ways they wouldn't have to work, I was figuring a way to work and love it." Subsequently, Spooner came upon a poster extolling the virtues of Snowbird, and because he had it in his mind that the West was where the fun was, he took off in pursuit of the setting sun. No job. Just hopes.

He arrived in Salt Lake City in October 1974, with \$100 in his pocket, and took an \$8-a-night motel room at the Majestic Rockies. He sat down on the bed and said, "Well, this is wonderful. I wonder what kind of TV they have out here." Did he consider what would happen when the \$100 ran out? "Certainly. I would be destitute."

At nearby Snowbird he got no encouragement. Back to the Majestic Rockies. "When you get a loaf of bread and a pound of baloney and plan to eat it for a week," Spooner says, "that humbles you." Then things got really bad. His money soon was gone, and so was the baloney. An old Bette Davis movie was on television ("about a lonely person") when the phone rang—just like in the movies—and Snowbird ski school boss Junior Bonanos was requesting Spooner's services.

Spooner was ready to begin instructing at Snowbird on opening day, Thanksgiving. He went to the top of the mountain, whooped, and started down. "I made four turns and I



Spooner's law: helping visitors have fun really helps the U.S. economy

thought, "Hmmm, I'm going too fast." True. He came over a cliff, landed half on snow, half on rocks, and ruptured his liver. "I was pretty close to going to the big ski school in the sky," Spooner says. "That mountain simply ate me up and spit me out. I couldn't conceive of a mistake that great." Spooner was hospitalized for three weeks.

In ski instructing, personality and style seem to count for more than substance. After all, if people can't get the hang of skiing, they don't say, "My instructor didn't know how to ski." Rather, they will say they didn't like him personally or, "He couldn't seem to explain what he wanted." Instruction has gotten more sophisticated since the days when somebody with an Austrian accent would stand on the mountain and say, "Bend zee knees, that will be \$3 please." Today, a winning personality translates into dollars for the instructor. In the beginning Spooner earned \$18 a day plus \$2 for each person in a group lesson, an average of six pupils for a \$30-a-day total. (A four-hour group lesson cost the student \$14.) But nowadays Spooner mainly teaches private lessons for \$20 an hour, of which Spooner gets half. Most lucrative of all is a full-day private, which costs \$120 for up to three people. Spooner averages \$200 a week. "I didn't make up skiing to make a buck," he admits.

There are perks. One group insists that Spooner join them for pizza and wine. "It's wonderful," he says. "Out here girls don't feel like they're being hustled like they do in the city." Says one of his students, a frequent visitor from New York, "Craig doesn't give the impression when he's teaching that he has seen it all before."

On the slopes, Spooner is a mixture of tour guide, drill sergeant, valet, psychologist, philosopher, con artist and trash collector. "We all want the same thing," he says to his class. "We want to feel more at ease on skis. It doesn't take long to get a feeling you are soaring with the eagles. If I laugh at you when you fall, don't worry. When we ski powder, we all fall." Then he does, to the hoots of the class. Spooner responds, "My, my, the vultures don't have any mercy after the lions are through."

Spoooner is a chatterbox, talking of the need for bending the knees and for holding the poles right, rotating the shoulders, edging the skis, proper rhythms, weight transfer, steering. "Does that feel different?" he shouts up the mountain at a student. "It really does," comes the reply. "Of course," says Spooner. "That's because I am a magician."

One of his theories is that "An instructor should never say, 'Ski down the hill.' That scares everybody. Instead, I say, 'Slide down the hill.'" He also does not believe in dwelling on what a person must do "because as soon as you start saying what they have to accomplish, they immediately start thinking about failing." His is more the old technique of the Army lieutenant: "Follow me." And as soldiers always have, ski students do, too. Spooner is coaxing: "Relax and feel the boards under your feet." And philosophizing: "Nature created this mountain for us and it has a personality. I feel the edges of my skis caressing the mountain. There just aren't many feelings in the world like powder skiing." Then he's off in a cloud of heavenly white. Next he's advising: "O.K., folks, be on time and flow with this mountain." A student muses, "That's really nice. I wonder what it means." For



Part of Spooner's duties: counseling some of the students after class

Spoooner, it's the satisfaction of helping someone have fun, to feel better about himself. "If I can't see a marked difference in four hours, I have failed," he says. "When it comes to the instructing, I am so serious I can't put enough into it."

There are down moments, of course, but not many. When students get bored, Spooner says they stare up the mountain. When they don't want to learn, "I question their motives for even being there with me." And while it is strenuous physical work, Spooner says, "A lot of people don't realize that in order to feel good, you have to work hard."

Which he does. Yet, here he is at midday, sprawled on a bench in the Utah sun, admiring the girls passing by and giving them ratings, if they are deserving. He'll work hard again today. But Spooner isn't fretting about that. In fact, he's genuinely excited about it. He has this wonderful capacity to enjoy this moment. "Can you imagine how good it is to work at a job where you are always seeing smiles on faces?" he says. "And to know that you put them there?" That, at bottom, is Craig Spooner's joy in work.

When people consider taking a job, Spooner figures, they should ask themselves, "Will the payment be that I am happy?" Spooner is ridiculously happy; his work is too much fun. As the 18th-century novelist Jean Paul Richter wrote, "Joy descends gently upon us like the evening dew and does not patter down like a hailstorm." There is no hail in Spooner's life; he subscribes (well, maybe oversubscribes) to the theory that we should eat, drink and be merry—for tomorrow we may run into a tree. "When you love something so much," he says, "you really get to know yourself." And he snaps on his boots, adjusts his goggles and swaggers off to, well, work.

Generally, it is the young and the free and the slightly restless who become instructors. Snowbird teacher Nancy Davis says, "The only people who would be interested in teaching skiing are those who love mountains, skiing, trees, snow and sun." For six months, a ski instructor in this country

continued

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continued



Montgomery's decorating touch: rods and reels instead of Rarabrandts.

must do something else. Spooner, who once ran with the bulls in Pamplona, is a carpenter. "See that house?" he says. "I framed it and it's going to stand for a while because I pounded it together." An older Snowbird ski school supervisor, Jack Reamer, walked away from a secure executive position with a Michigan power company after 16 years. He says, "You have to be crazy to be a ski instructor. Plus there's a little bit of the child in all of us." Another supervisor, Sal Raio, 37, says of Spooner, "He's a fun-loving guy and that is what makes him a good instructor. His classes always seem to be having fun."

Back in the room where the instructors congregate, Ole Olsen says, "Craig looks like somebody drew him—a cartoon. Everything about him is exaggerated." Spooner, heading into his fourth season at Snowbird, is screaming at a shapely woman ski instructor who turns heads on the slopes. "For God's sake, Stephanie, cover up. Wear a smock when

you're in here." And he's shaking his head. "You can't have too much fun here on Saturday. You can have a lot but not too much."

Once more in the bar, various people are paying calls at Spooner's table, including a young lady wearing a T shirt inscribed, *GREAT EXPECTATIONS*. Says Spooner, "I like your T shirt." Says she, "Thank you. I wore it for you." The music blares ("Those were the days, my friend, we thought they'd never end") and Craig is reflective.

"These are the days, my friend," he says. "Can you imagine working at a place like this? People spend \$1,500 a week for the privilege and I get paid for it. Every night I go to bed and I think, 'Let's see, when I get up in the morning, I'm going to ski in three feet of powder snow with people dying to have a good time.'" Outside the snow is piling up.

U.S. Senator Lowell Weicker (R., Conn.) is laboring on one side of the net and muttering, "Why can't I be 20 years younger?" He also berates himself in more formal terms. "Come on, Senator, what kind of shot is that?" Because it's a rhetorical question, Weicker does not expect anyone to yell out the truth. "A lousy one, Senator. Perfectly rotten." Nobody does, not even his partner. Nor does anyone rush to agree at the court nearby where Senator Howard Metzenbaum (D., Ohio) is missing shots at a record pace and complaining after each one. "Oh, you dummy!"

But things brighten for Weicker when he hits a strong forehand that sends the opposition, Donna Dearborn and her partner, running into each other. Weicker's mood shifts, not from despair to happiness but more from despair to deviousness. "Hey, Donna," Weicker says. "I was hoping you'd knock each other cold, then I would call the rule calling for continuous play and declare myself the winner." Senators are sharp on rules, especially when they're losing. Dearborn smiles, winningly.

She always smiles winningly. For good reason. What does she have to frown about? At 24, Donna Dearborn is a tennis pro at John Gardiner's Tennis Ranch, a temple for the rich located in Arizona's Paradise Valley, near Phoenix. Paradise Valley is sun-blessed (something more than 350 days of the year) and God-designated as one of the nation's ranking splendors. "When I tell my friends I teach tennis here," Dearborn says, "they say, 'That's nice. But what's your real job?'"

That is her real job. She stands in the sun and recommends, "Bend your knees." Meanwhile, she is deepening her tan, which causes an elderly lady from Pittsburgh to look at her and say, "When I grow up, I want to look just like her." Dearborn teaches tennis to people who spend an average of \$1,000 each, plus transportation, for the privilege of a week at Gardiner's. And she often plays tennis with celebrities, like Ken Rosewall, who hangs out at Gardiner's between tournaments in his \$400,000 villa with a tennis court on the roof. She played the other day with, ah, well, she's not sure if it was Merv Griffin or Mike Douglas; recently it was John Scali, former U.N. ambassador.

Now Dearborn is sitting in the hot sun while a lot of the rest of the nation freezes, listening to Senator Charles Percy (R., Ill.) read some not-too-awful original poetry and

continued

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contemplating a foot race with Stan Smith. Life at Gardiner's does not have many sharp edges for Donna Dearborn of Brattleboro, Vt.

"This is a gentle job for Donna," says the boss, John Gardiner. "She's with people when they're nice." And there is no heavy lifting. One of her colleagues, 20-year-old Paul Mallory, of West Covina, Calif., says, "This is ridiculous to get paid for teaching a game in a place like this."

So what do you say about a woman who is young and beautiful and single and talented? About a woman who plays tennis with the stars by day and studies the stars above by night? About a woman with a college degree in mathematics who is involved with a game she loves and can play as much as she wants? Dearborn says, "I can't imagine ever being any happier than I am now."

It is unlikely that the millions who awake hating every weekday morning can fathom the life of Donna Dearborn. "Sometimes," she says, "this job isn't as glamorous as my friends think, but I kind of like the fact they think it is. Besides, if I told them it wasn't glamorous, they wouldn't believe me, anyway." Her friends would be right.

"I am doing something I believe in," she says. "At the end of the day I feel like I've done something important. I've helped others have fun and I've had fun." Her joy at work flows from the customers—and sometimes from their excuses. One student says, "Donna, I can't play as well here because the sun is so much brighter than it is at home." Another says, "I can't hit high balls because the people I play with back home all hit low ones."

Most important, Dearborn can laugh at herself. The other day she was halfway through a week's instruction course with a man she had been calling "Joe" when he remarked shyly that, while he didn't mind, his name was actually "Lee." It wasn't until much later that Dearborn learned who Lee was: Leon Uns. He wasn't angry, she says. But then, how could he be? For there he was, hitting tennis balls with sunny Donna Dearborn, for whom work and play often are idyllically synonymous. And that's certainly worth being called Joe for.

How did Dearborn fall into this lap of luxury and contentment? Blind, stupid luck is the most plausible explanation. Being a tennis pro was not a dream she had as a youngster. She got into sports playing tackle football with boys and went on through a progression of sports, most notably field hockey. A tennis racket didn't touch her hand until she was in high school. "I tried it," she says, "and something good happened. The ball went over the net." Her father, Frank, is superintendent of Brattleboro's Recreation and Parks Department, and she learned from his strokes, "which weren't wonderful."

But she at least thought more of dad's tennis instruction than his automobile driving lessons. When she was 16, she put on the turn signal but didn't turn. The old man indicated this shortcoming in her driving technique, at which point she slammed on the brakes, got out, walked home and, says Frank Dearborn, "left me sitting in the middle of the street on the wrong side of the car, door open, turn sig-

nal blinking. I've always considered Donna very resolute."

For most of her growing-up years, her main squeeze was math, not tennis, not anything else. She'd ride her red Schwinn bicycle with the two dented baskets (from running over a fire hydrant) down by Pleasant Valley Reservoir where she would sit and work out geometry proofs until her heart was content. At Springfield (Mass.) College, she continued to play tennis. But more important, she met Bruce Wright, then a faculty member and now a doctor for sick tennis strokes, who was heavily into tennis and who conveyed the sport's excitement to Dearborn. "With Donna," he says, "the racket is her brush and the court is her canvas." Donna went to North Carolina State for graduate work in applied math, "but when I got there, it seemed to me that being 22 years old and spending 20 hours a day with math books wasn't right." She decided to leave school and play tennis tournaments, which she did, driving around in a 1967 VW that consumed more oil than gas.

She determined to follow tennis to California or Florida. A friend offered a ride to Phoenix in the summer of 1976 and once in the Valley of the Sun, Dearborn found a "house with no windows propped up on cinder blocks with a mangy horse in the back." She had just spread her sleeping bag on the floor when the black widow and tarantula exterminator showed up.

After plenty of job-looking futility, she eventually went to Gardiner's, her toes protruding through raggedy sneakers, and with no racket to demonstrate her talents. Head pro Bill Fouk said, "You've got to wear white all the time, shave your legs, maybe clean toilets and always smile." Said Donna Dearborn, "It sounds like the Army here and you're the general." A few days later she was hired. Fouk says, "She could play the game well, she was attractive and personable and had a college degree and teaching experience. I'd take 100 like her."

By 6:45 a.m. daily, Donna is running—a 12-mile jaunt around the desert as the cottontails dart about the yucca and mesquite and the sun begins poking pink behind the Superstition Mountains. (In December she ran Arizona's Fiesta Bowl Marathon in 3:18:15 to qualify for the Boston Marathon.) "I love the sunrise," she says while jogging easily. "Especially these days when the sun is rising and the moon is setting at the same time. Plus I feel better because I've accomplished something before the day has even started for most people." Then it's 50 sit-ups, 25 push-ups and a breakfast consisting of "an orange going into the shower and an apple coming out."

Most of the rest of the day is spent teaching tennis. Or springing rackets in the pro shop. Or sometimes working as a court keeper, which means keeping things all spruced up and the balls in the baskets because, as pro Jeff Stewart, like Fouk a veep with the Gardiner corporation, says, "Nobody learns from an unmade bed." Sometimes Dearborn is a hostess, meaning that for \$12 an hour she plays tennis with a client, most often to fill out a doubles game. Sometimes she gives private lessons.

The pros (20 men, seven women) can date the clients if they want, the rule forbidding it having been changed recently. But wild partying and general high times are more

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myth than fact, largely because of the effects of a day's worth of Arizona sun on one's body. Donna spends most of her time with Foulk, who told a staff meeting, "I've asked her to marry me three times and she has refused me more firmly each time." To Donna Dearborn the idea of marriage is as appealing as a double fault on match point.

Of her teaching Foulk says, "All of us want to be loved and this is a nice way of achieving it. When somebody says, 'Wow, I've improved so much!' that just makes my whole week." Everyone enrolled in the clinic (3,000 a year) hits as many tennis balls as he can stand. Gardiner considers tennis instruction "a calling, just like the ministry." But he laments "there are so many burns in this business."

As a relatively new pro, Dearborn makes \$4.25 an hour for a 40-hour week; veteran pros at Gardiner's make up to \$9.50. She admits, "I can't tell automatically what's wrong with somebody's stroke. I have to study it." On the court her vocabulary runs to "be ready, too bad, short swing, much better, good footwork, watch the ball leave the machine, lift your chin and try again." The emphasis at Gardiner's is on having a good time; this is not a Lombardi-like training camp. "What Gardiner's wants," Rosewall says, "is to give people a bit of a holiday and a happy week."

Things do go wrong in Camelot. Dearborn sprained an ankle when she stepped on a tennis ball. Picking up some wooden blocks used in instruction, she got splinters in her hand, then went out and played terribly in a doubles match in which she was partnered with Rosewall. "He's only my favorite player," she sighs, "and I've only looked at one of his instructional films about 80 times." And she muses that there's a sameness about the weather and her life. "I suppose I could use more variety," she says. True, a day filled with nothing but backhands can glaze a person's eyes.

But she does lead the good life and she knows it. Sometimes it's the Phoenix Symphony; sometimes it's astronomy classes at Scottsdale Community College; sometimes a course in cabinetmaking. She goes to Montana during the winter to cross-country ski; last summer when the weather in Arizona was stifling, she taught at another Gardiner facility in Sun Valley, Idaho.

The other night, after nearly 12 hours in the sun, Donna Dearborn returned to her apartment, put Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2 on the stereo, and dropped into a vinyl chair, too tired to even face fixing her newest favorite food—broiled bananas with honey on top. Yet, even the exhaustion is part of the good life. As Bruce Wright says, "What makes for an enviable job? That you hardly work? Nonsense." But will Dearborn forevermore stand against this lovely backdrop cooing cheerily, "Watch the ball?"

"Sometimes," she says, "maybe I'll go where there are really big mountains, a good university and tennis courts. But just being here and teaching people a game that can bring them so much pleasure, it's hard to imagine anything any better than this." Then she turns her attention to deciding whether to read a little Michener or Vonnegut tonight. Or even Joe Uris. Paradise Valley is paradise.

For many people, the only thing better than sitting on a dock in Key West, sipping a gin and tonic and applauding

the sun's last brilliant act of the day—a ritual in that tropical island town—is to be on a boat racing the sun home across the pellucid water.

Now the salt spray is in your face, the sun has just made its graceful exit, there is a glow in the sky and glory in the heart as the 18-foot skiff makes a final, swooping turn into Key West OceanSide Marina. The boat eases down the channel and then slides gently up to the floating dock. "It sure beats working," says Gene Montgomery.

Then it is time for a beer, to stare off into the winking lights of the town and to make plans for doing the same thing all over again tomorrow. Gene Montgomery is, in fact, working. His boat is his office, the ocean is his territory, and he is president of it all. There is no board of directors. Montgomery, 36, is a fishing guide specializing in light-tackle angling.

"Lots of people tell me I have the best job in the world," he says. "They say, 'You mean you really do this for a living?' They think it's all just fun. Which, of course, I guess it is." And he slouches some more before down his contented throat. Montgomery is living a fantasy in a fantasyland, a combination that millions can only dream of. A Key West real estate salesman, Robin Walker, says of the area where the sun shines about 83% of the time, "The real world has passed us by." That is not said with regret.

One of Montgomery's customers is Dr. Lewis Carroll, a Miami Beach dentist. Carroll says, "Gene looks 12 years younger than he is. He has no high blood pressure, drinks no Maalox, always has a tan, rides a bike to work, has no weight problem, no emotional ups and downs, no tranquilizers. His love life is straightforward, everything is in order, he doesn't know what a sleepless night is and his customers bring his lunch to the boat. He has got life absolutely knocked." So how often does Carroll think with envy about Montgomery's job? "Not often. Only twice every day of my life when I'm fighting the traffic on the expressway."

Traditionally, fishing has been considered the ideal leisure activity, the premier luxury at which one can fritter away time with society's approval. The classic sign on a door in this country is, *GONE FISHIN'*. Lewis Carroll says, "Montgomery is doing for a living what most of the rest of us work like dogs to earn enough money for so we can do it for a few days each year." Montgomery figures that he'll fish about 150 days this year—for pay. On his days off, he goes fishing. "Everybody thinks because it's your job, you want to get away from it," he says. "But if you enjoy it, why try to get away?" Other leisure pursuits—playing golf or tennis or camping or mountain climbing—imply a certain amount of effort; fishing implies no effort. Of course, anyone who has ever fought an amberjack or tarpon or a permit on light (12-, 10-, 6-pound) tackle knows that's not true. Yet, fishing always conjures up an image of dropping bait over the side of a boat and doing nothing.

Montgomery finds joy in his job partly because of his own whimsical mind. On the permit flats, a hook is baited with a live crab, then the line is cast and Montgomery muses, "I wonder what those crabs think the first time they get

a ride through the air like that?" That's the kind of thing a man can contemplate while fishing with Montgomery. As the skiff floats lazily across the indescribable world of the flats, he laments that "Too many people do what their parents want rather than what will make them happy. Me? I just wish that I could freeze my life right now so that it would last forever."

How does one fall into such idyllic work? For Montgomery, it just happened. He was born in inland Arcadia, Fla., moving when he was 10 to Miami, where the fishing improved. He enrolled at the University of Miami, to become an electrical engineer, but quit after one semester. What did Montgomery want with such a degree? "I didn't have the slightest idea. That's why I quit."

Then came eight years in the Navy with duty in the Caribbean, the Mediterranean and the Pacific and in Bermuda and Alaska ("That was great. Nobody had their wives or kids there to mess things up") and Key West. But Montgomery tired of "going where somebody else wanted me to go." He joined Eastern Airlines in Miami as a mechanic. "It was just a job," he says. "I put in eight hours. What I didn't like was starting a job, then the shift would end, and somebody else would finish it." He was offered the choice of being transferred to New York or Chicago, "if you can call that a choice." For years he had been fishing on weekends and vacation, fishing hard, often with his older brother Bob, one of the pioneer light-tackle fishing guides in Key West. So now he decided to let himself be furloughed and he went fishing. Fulltime. Four months later, he received a letter from Eastern informing him he was being rehired. He returned but was still not hooked on changing tires and brakes on jets. "Why should I do something that I don't care about? Around Eastern, the big word was 'security.' Which seems to mean you work all your life for good retirement benefits, at which time you die."

So Montgomery called his brother, and asked if he thought there would be enough business for him, too. Although Bob was dubious, that was somehow enough encouragement for Gene. He admits that if he had had a wife and family, he might have stayed with Eastern, but a friend, Oma Hoffman of Miami, thinks Gene would be miserable doing anything else. "He wants his customers to catch fish," she says, "but he doesn't have a schedule where he must catch a bonefish between 9 and 11 a.m. That's nice."

Montgomery charges \$125 a day to take one or two people fishing for tarpon, bonefish, permit and barracuda in the 18-foot shallow-draft skiff. For his larger boat, a high-performance deep-V 25-footer that he custom-built during a slack fall fishing season a couple of years ago, the fee is now \$150. The big boat is used for offshore work, in the near-by Gulf Stream or on the wrecks and reefs that dot the waters around Key West, and the quarry can be anything from sailfish, wahoo and tuna to grouper, snapper, kingfish and amberjack.

Naturally, some of his charters are cut off or cut short by high winds and stormy weather and so the gross income shrinks. Montgomery's take this year may be about \$18,000, but the net will be closer to \$10,000. Among his expenses are \$120 a month for storing his two boats at the Ocean-

side Marina, plus \$36 for an extra dock downtown. Then there is gas, bait, repairs, tackle. He is toying with the idea of going up to Destin, Fla. for a few months in the summer to fish marlin when business is slow in Key West, but if he does so he will have to spend at least \$25,000 for a bigger boat to handle the much longer offshore run and also to carry parties of four or more.

These days Montgomery has plenty of competition in Key West, and some of his fellow guides have been known to cut prices to get customers. Regrettably, the fishing-guide business also has its share of frauds. "A guy gets a boat," says Montgomery, "and he's an instant fishing guide. Some of those boats look like bombs went off in them."

A few days fishing with a top light-tackle guide, however, is a memorable experience. Montgomery's boats are immaculate, and his knowledge of the fish and the areas they inhabit is vast. With tackle, he is a perfectionist. As his brother Bob says, "He takes a little more time tying knots than I do. Mine don't come untied but you know for sure his won't." Another of Montgomery's customers, Pete Lehner, owner of Leigh Textiles in Boston, says, "Gene fishes in some damn good water and he has a mild, confident manner." Lehner is one of Montgomery's favorite customers because "He's used to fishing in wind and rain and fog up there. So a horrible day down here is beautiful to him."

On the boat, Montgomery does everything. A customer need only marvel at his efficiency and, when the proper spot is reached, cast a lure or bait where Montgomery says. "It does take a lot of patience to find bonefish or permit," says Montgomery, "and then you really need patience when the angler blows the east—the bait lands behind them or beyond them or on top of them. Sometimes all day. But I am patient."

He scans the water continuously, looking for the spooky, elusive fish that roam the flats. "You can just sense when there are fish around," he says. "This is a good-looking spot. But what looks good to me doesn't necessarily look good to the fish. And you can be in a dynamite spot but at the wrong time. Maybe these fish are going to stand up today."

There ensues the wonderful sound of quiet, bemirched only by crabs scratching around inside the live-bait well. "Silence," says Montgomery, "is not scary to me. In fact, people ought to be quiet a lot more than they are." Oma Hoffman says of him, "He doesn't jabber all day about nothing." But the contented look on his face as he fishes speaks volumes. The water laps gently at the boat, as far as the eye can see, gorgeous water, a thousand shades of blue and green. Inevitably, Montgomery is spotting fish. A customer's casts range from totally unacceptable to a little better than awful. Says Montgomery, "You have to be prepared for disappointments in fishing."

Late one afternoon, he is leading a customer in search of bonefish as they wade across the flats—hundreds of miles of shallow water. As the sun heads lower on a Chamber of Commerce day, the bonefish are showing themselves, their dorsal fins and tails breaking the surface of the water as

continued

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they nose down to root for crustaceans on the bottom. "Isn't that the most beautiful sight in the world?" marvels Montgomery. "All those fish flopping around out there." One is caught, quickly admired and released. Montgomery says that about 99% of the fish his customers catch are released. "The thing about fishing," he says, "is you don't have to kill something to be successful."

While the magic of fishing permeates Montgomery's pores, he's a realist. He frets about getting too much sun, about the uncertainty of the weather (in the first six months of 1976, he had to cancel out 30 days of charters); about the fickleness of the fish ("Damn, that's a lot of empty water out there"). And while an important customer from the North is awestruck by the caliber of women he has seen in Montgomery's company, Montgomery downplays such pursuits. "As you may have noticed," he says, "a full day in the sun and the wind poling a skiff or fighting big fish sort of takes it out of you."

There are other minuses. Customers get hooks in his fingers and slap him alongside his head with fish. They have thrown up on him. Fly fishermen nail him with their backcasts. Three years ago, he was with a man and his son, fishing for tarpon. (April, May and June are the best months for tarpon, and thus busiest for Montgomery.) He leaned over to pick up a long push pole; somebody else moved to that side of the boat, and Montgomery went overboard, headlong. How did a man who had just contracted to pay more than \$100 for a fishing guide react to seeing him fall out of the boat first thing? "They didn't know what to do," says Montgomery, "so I said, 'Well, feel free to laugh.' Which they did."

Later, feet up and relaxing at his trailer home, Montgomery ponders his good luck. "Sometimes I think, 'Maybe I should be doing something else.' But then I think of all the good times I'm having. I guess the world could do without fishing guides altogether. But I do give people a fun way to spend their money. And when you're out there and see 50 tarpon coming at you with their mouths open, well, the thrill of it just sort of makes your knees wobbly."

So who has the best job in sports? "You mean," asks Gene Montgomery, "after mine?"

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FOR THE RECORD

A roundup of the week Feb. 6-12

PRO BASKETBALL—There are no ties in basketball—when two tied teams play one to win. So it was when New Jersey met Indiana at Prozacway. Five members of the undermanned Pacers had landed when the game went into overtime. Don Roesch didn't get his sixth personal but was allowed to remain in the game as Indiana had only nine men in uniform. After a clutch of 17 fouls and 18 turnovers, the 'Pacs prevailed thanks to John Williams playing against the team he was traded from two weeks before. Stager John scored 38 points, including three jumpers in the final two minutes, for a 140-118 win. Then ex-Proton Howard Porter (11 points, nine rebounds, three blocked shots) came off the bench to give New Jersey its second victory—tying its longest win streak of the season—117-117 over Detroit, moving the Nets to within 15 games of first-place Philadelphia. Chicago has the 'Horn' members, beating Philadelphia 108-106 to become the only team in the league to defeat the Atlantic leader three times this year. The Bulls feel their times used in the playoffs—Houston (twice) and Kansas City (twice). The Kings got one more shot to climb on to the Midwest cellar for the first time since December. Buffalo had its 18-game losing streak snapped by the Sixers, whose John Irving was sidelined with phlebotomy. Randy Smith who had 21 points, scored three clutch three-pointers for the 114-114 victory. Also, a 10-point game for the Bulls was going—win New Orleans, which was named the services of injured Guard Pete Maravich. The Jets lost to Cleveland, Philadelphia and Detroit. Golden State lost in fifth straight on the Lakers losing streak and—other move—the two teams added players for Pacific cellular division. Nonetheless, only one division team is playing below .500—Golden State at .491.

BOILERBOILING—An East German team driven by BOBBI SCHONAU won the world four-man championship at Lake Placid (page 10).

BOWLING—Bobby Jakes at the sixth through the 10th frames, ERIC RITGER defeated Marshall Holman 248-226 to win his 19th PBA title, the \$80,000 World Men's Open in Cleveland.

VIRGINIA NORFOLK became the first regular winner of the 1978 women's PBA tour with a 379-pin victory over Patsy Couchois in the \$25,000 Cavalade of Stars tournament in Wichita, Kans.

BOXING—CARLOS PALOMINO knocked out Ryu Seon-much in the seventh round in Las Vegas to retain his WBC welterweight title.

COURT TENNIS—GENE SCOTT won the U.S. amateur championship for the fifth straight year, defeating Ralston Brown 6-0, 6-4, 6-3, 6-5 in Philadelphia.

FIGURE SKATING—At the U.S. championships in Portland, Ore. LINDA FRATIENNE won her second straight senior women's title and CARLEE TUCKER took her second consecutive senior men's championship.

GOLF—Shooting a four under par 72, DEBBIE ALSTIN won the \$50,000 American Cancer Society tournament in Miami by one stroke when Nayako Yoshizawa missed a four-foot putt and bogeyed the final hole.

HOCKEY—NHL. It was a week for "Get Well Quick" cards. Checked heavily by Dickinson Dave Farrish of the New York Rangers, Buffalo Lyle Wayne Raitt cracked his head on the ice, went into convulsions and half-obliterated his nose. Martin was taken from the ice into a stretcher and rushed to a hospital. "The get well card is better from now on," Martin said. "They told me that if I got hit on the head again, it may cause some problems." After a column behind the goal during the blizzard, 1-5 shot of Detroit, New York Center Wayne Mitchell—who works a helmet—fell to the ice and suffered a concussion. The Islanders, who lead Philadelphia by two points and a game in third in the Patrick Division race, also lost the services of Mike Bono, their rookie goal-scoring sensation. Six several games, Moments after scoring his longest 400 goal in the Islanders' 5-4 loss to the Capitals, Bono collided with Rick Delmonico Phil Russell and came away with a severely bruised shoulder. Toronto Forward Jerry Butler was hospitalized with a concussion after hitting his head on the ice during the Maple Leafs' 3-4 win over St. Louis. Philadelphia would prefer to forget its 5-2 defeat of Vancouver in that game the Flyers lost their top body builder on the bench, Ruffe Weng

Paul Holmgren, for a minimum of three weeks because of a fractured vertebra, and Captain Bobby Clarke suffered a fractured left thumb. Clarke intends to play with a cast. Montreal extended its winning streak to a record 22 games, just one shy of the NHL record. St. Louis lost a Philadelphia Toronto and Montreal and now has gone a 14th-record 11 games without a victory. Minnesota made its second coaching change since Thanksgiving, replacing Andre Boudrias who had previously replaced Fred Harris, with 19-year-old Forward Delmonico Lou Nanne, a North Star expansion original. Nanne also took over the club's general manager position from the deceased Jack Gordon. In Nanne's first game as a player Minnesota lost to the Rangers 3-0, but in his first game as coach he led the North Star beat Vancouver 3-2.

WHA Indianapolis won the Minnesota title, giving Ruffe Weng Bill Goldsworthy another North Star expansion original—the additional job of coach following the resignation of Ron Higgins. Birmingham played its first game following the three-game suspension and \$2,500 fine levied on Coach Glen Sommer for "conduct detrimental" to the league. Owner John Bassett coached the Bulls to a 6-1 loss against Indianapolis, then Glen trial manager Giffes Lager coached them to a 3-0 loss at Winnipeg.

HORSE RACING—Registration is now the reviewing of the 14th Grey Cup two weeks ago. RUN (DUSTY) RUN and Silver Series, equally weighted at 122 pounds, battled head to head down the stretch with Run Dying their most surprising as victory and in the victory in a photo finish in Hialeah's \$12,000 Seneca Handicap. An before sophomore Bob's Daring was third. The 4-year-old son of Dan Commander, under Don Bramfield, covered the race 10 lengths in 1:47.5 and paid \$6.60.

TAISEL VOUS (52.80) Donald Ponce up swags San Antonio's draft night for 4-year-olds by winning the \$100,000 La Cañada country the race 10 lengths in 1:40.0, over a muddy track and closing the race four lengths in front of Damsel Crane.

CRANCE DANCER (50.20), winner of the Arizona Purse Purse, won the \$4,000 San Vicente Stakes at Santa Anita, the West Coast's first major race for the Kentucky Derby under Richard Culbreth, the 4-year-old son of Gauda Dancer ran the seven furlongs over a slow track in 1:25.5.

SKIN—PHIL MAHRE of White Pass, Wash. took both heats of the World Cup curling at Chamonix, France in the combined event of 15.18. 13.18 finish that world champion Hagman Stenroos, who was second, won the first slalom victory of the season for the U.S. team. Canada got its first World Cup win in two years and its strongest finish since the series was inaugurated in 1967 when KEN READ won the downhill with teammate Dave Murray second.

SPEED SKATING—ERIC HEIDEN won his second straight overall title at the world sprint championships at Lake Placid. Both Heidens finished second to LIORON SACHCHLOV of the Soviet Union at the women's competition (page 10).

TENNIS—SANDY MAYER won his first WCT title defeating Eddie Dibbs for the first time over 1-6, 6-4 in the \$175,000 St. Louis Classic.

HEINE GUNTHARDT, an awarded 19-year-old athlete from Switzerland, upset 1980 World Sprinter's Cup 3-0, 3-6, 6-1 to win the \$75,000 Springfield (Mass.) International Classic.

HUSKIES—FIRED BY the St. Louis Cardinals, Coach DRIN LOREY (53), after weeks of public wrangling with owner Bill Bidwell, Carey was the winning coach in Cardinals history with a five-year 40-37-1 record and two divisional championships (page 10).

NAMED Swimmer JOHN NABER by the AAL as winner of the Sullivan Award (honoring the year's top U.S. amateur athlete).

NAMED By the New Orleans Saints as coach, DICK NOLAN, 45, who led the San Francisco 49ers in three divisional titles, to succeed Hank Stram, who was fired.

NAMED By Eastern Michigan as assistant coach, MIKE STOKES, 36, an assistant coach at Wisconsin since 1975, to succeed Ed Norbeck, who resigned.

CREDITS

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19TH HOLE THE READERS TAKE OVER

Edited by GAY FLOOD

FOUR-CORNERS

Sir

Thank you for your outstanding coverage of the trends and changes that occur in professional and collegiate sports. Last fall I picked up my SI and read an outstanding article on the use of the 3-4 defense in the NFL (*Say Hello to the Fearsome Threesome*, Oct. 17). Later, there was a piece on the use of "enforcers" in the NBA (*When the Going Gets Rough*, Oct. 31). I also enjoyed the article on the alleged AFC supremacy in the NFL (*Vince, You Wouldn't Believe It*, Nov. 21). But these fine articles have now been topped by your fantastic report on the background and increased use of the four-corners offense, so prominent in college basketball (*They're Foursquare for the Four-Corners*, Feb. 6). If I simply want to learn the scores or who beat whom, I can read the newspaper. But with SI's comprehensive coverage, my overall sports awareness has been increased. Please continue.

JOHN M. McAVOY
Glastonbury, Conn.

Sir

Being a resident of North Carolina I have had numerous chances to observe the four-corners style of basketball. In my opinion, it shortchanges the paying customer, and any coach who uses it is admitting that the other team just might be better than his. Teams that win the big one—that is, the NCAA championship—usually win on strength, not gimmicks.

HAYWOOD RAINES
Asheboro, N.C.

Sir

Basketball is meant to be fast-paced and action-packed. There is plenty of room for strategy without giving the game all the excitement of a chess match. Dr. Naomith must be turning over in his grave at what Dean Smith has done to his sport. To the powers that be in the NCAA I say, please give us the 30-second clock.

J. D. HOLDER
Raleigh, N.C.

Sir

I'm a devout North Carolina State fan and, therefore, anti-Carolina. I despise Dean Smith and his four-corners. It's a terrible offense to have to watch. But installing a 30-second clock would be as bad as banning the dunk. It would take away a whole dimension of the college game. Anybody who wants to see a shot clock can watch pro ball. I like college basketball the way it is.

BRAD DAVIS
Petersen Garden, N.C.

RON LEFLORE'S STORY

Sir

Your Feb. 6 issue is the finest I have ever read. George Plimpton continues to be the outstanding firsthand-narrator of our time ("Lord, No More Than Five") and Detroit *Free Press* baseball writer Jim Hawkins' and Ron LeFlore's collaboration on *Stealing War* My Specialty is superb.

MARC WESLEY
Sports Director
WNEM Television
Saginaw, Mich.

Sir

My mother and father work closely with lifers and other convicts at a nearby correctional institute, and I know how tough it is for these guys to get a break as ex-cons in our society. I congratulate Ron LeFlore for his efforts to go straight and become one of baseball's great players. I also commend the Detroit Tigers for giving him a fair chance. They judged him on his ability and talent and did not reject him because he was an ex-con. And, finally, I congratulate SI for printing such a fine story.

JORDY PRATER
Dallas, Pa.

Sir

Ron LeFlore is a special kind of person who has accomplished what many only dream of. He has risen from the depths of human existence to a respected position in our society. For this he deserves all the credit in the world, and I wouldn't deny him that. I must say, though, that while the article was generally good, it devoted too much time to detailed accounts of LeFlore's glowing over his illegal accomplishments. I realize that his crimes are part of the story and that they shouldn't be ignored, but perhaps they could have been handled a bit more modestly.

BRIAN J. BERNSTEIN
Synapse, N.Y.

RECREATIONAL DEMANDS

Sir

Who? Hold it just a doggone minute! When writing about California's Mineral King Valley and its possible development as a ski area (*SCORECARD*, Feb. 6) you state, "The skiing needs of Southern Californians remain to be addressed."

As an alpine skier with more than 40 years' experience, and as a longtime alpine ski coach, I have always been a booster of winter sports. However, I certainly take exception to that statement. I see no reason why an agency of the Federal Government should destroy any of the little wilderness that remains just so Southern Californians can have a place to ski.

A lot of people here in New England are interested in surfing. Is the U.S. Government supposed to install a giant wave-maker off the Cape Cod National Seashore just so they can have a place to surf?

Horseleathers! If the people in Southern California want to ski, let them move to some place where there are ski facilities.

CARL H. WILLIAMS
Salisbury, Conn.

Sir

What about the golfing needs of north Alabamians? The mountain-climbing needs of south Floridians? The snowmobiling needs of East Texans? The deep-sea fishing needs of Kansans? You can't be serious.

PETE WOOD
Bethesda, Md.

THE ORIGINAL SEVEN-PLUS

Sir

Okay, you've stumped me. Your LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER (Jan. 30) says that Assistant Managing Editor Jack Tibby's retirement reduces to seven the number of staffers whose names appeared on your original masthead. But you don't name the seven.

I have subscribed to SI continuously since Aug. 16, 1954. In fact, I still have some prizes I won peddling subscriptions before Vol. 1. No. 1 appeared. But I don't have a copy of the original masthead, and an inspection of a recent one (Vol. 48, No. 5) reveals that my memory might be slipping a bit. The names of Roy Terrell, Robert W. Creamer, Robert H. Boyle, Frank Deford, Don Jenkins, Coles Phinizy and John Underwood ring a long-ago bell, but did that bell ring almost 25 years ago? Bill Leggett and I shared many pleasant hours when I was sports editor of the St. Petersburg (*Pile*) Independent and he was writing baseball, but I don't believe he is a member of the "Quarter-Century Club."

At any rate, I'm sure I am not the only SI fan who is curious about the identity of the "Magnificent Seven." Please tell us who they are.

JAMES C. RYAN
Glenview, N.C.

• Creamer and Phinizy go all the way back, and the other five are Bill Bernstein, Art Brawley, Harvey Grit, Merv Hyman and Ginnie Kraft. In addition, Jeannette Bruce, Betty DeMeester, Eleanor Mikosove, Barbara Murray, Catherine Dglove and Bob Williams were members of the original staff but did not appear on this first masthead.—ED

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